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Ministry of Education and Sports



STRATEGY FOR EARLY AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION (2010-2015)

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The Strategy was developed through using a participatory process that included all relevant partners. The document was also the subject of public debate with key representatives of the education system from preschool to primary, secondary and higher education, the health, sector, social welfare services, and other ministries and institutions, local municipalities, donors, NGOs and other organisations.

The Strategy for Early and Preschool Education in Montenegro was developed with UNICEF support.



Foreword

The system of early learning and preschool education provides an initial but critically important opportunity to impact children's future psychosocial and cognitive development, physical growth and health. It establishes conditions for an integrated approach to early development for all children through ensuring good childcare and protection, education, and processes of early learning; enhancing cognitive activities; establishing personal values and providing protective measures for children.

The aim of the Ministry of Education and Science is to ensure the creation of conditions for developing the full potential and growth of all children in Montenegro and their equal access to preschool education in line with international instruments, most especially the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Quality preschool education must be established through partnerships and promoting the joint responsibility of the family, community and society as a whole. Early learning and preschool education are the best investments for the future, for progressive social development, and for the prevention of negative outcomes in the areas of social, cultural, health, and economic development.

Our fundamental goal for the implementation of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education will be to prevent any non-inclusiveness that could lead to social exclusion. Therefore, we shall focus on removing barriers to the inclusion of all children in early learning and preschool education.

Advocating for the best interests of the child through equal access to early learning and preschool services for all children and their families, and enhancing their participation in early learning activities, creates the least restrictive environment and establishes in a comprehensive manner conditions for a safe and secure childhood that respects the culture, dignity and autonomy of each child. In this way, the early learning and preschool system provides the foundation for the full and effective participation of children in all spheres of their life in society.

Slavoljub Stijepović, Minister of Education and Sports



General country information

Montenegro became an independent state on 3 June 2006, after the referendum held on 21 May 2006. In its Constitution¹, it is defined as a civil and democratic, ecological state based on social justice and the rule of law.

Montenegro is located in South-Eastern Europe, geographically positioned in the Adriatic-Dinaric part of the Balkan Peninsula and Central Mediterranean. It is divided into three regions: southern/coastal, central and northern, with 21 municipalities, 1,256 settlements.² According to the data from the last census in 2003, Montenegro has a total population of 672,565, including people residing abroad. As for the ethnic structure, the breakdown is as follows:

Table 1 The national structure of the population, the last census, 2003.

<i>Ethnic group</i>	<i>Montenegrin</i>	<i>Serbian</i>	<i>Bosnian</i>	<i>Albanian</i>	<i>Muslim</i>	<i>Croatian</i>	<i>Roma</i>	<i>Other</i>
%	43.16	31.99	7.77	5.03	3.97	1.10	0.42	6.56

According to data of the Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT), in 2008 the total number of children up to the age of 6 was 47,506, of which 24,850 were boys and 22,656 were girls.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2008 was 3,085,621,000, with appropriations for all levels of education amounting to 4.41% of GDP.³

Table 2 The Gross Domestic Product (GDP), budget allocation for education, education as a share of GDP

	2006	2007	2008
GDP	€ 2,148.90 m	€ 2,807.90 m	€ 3,338.00 m
Education	€ 88.67 m	€ 116.99 m	€ 147.22 m
Education as a share of GDP	4.13%	4.17%	4.41%

¹ The Constitution of Montenegro was adopted at the Constitutional Parliament on 19 October 2007.

² Montenegro's Statistical Office – MONSTAT

³ Source: Statistical Office Montenegro – MONSTAT

Introduction

The Strategy for Early and Preschool Education is a guide for planning, developing and implementing specific goals and action plans. It is an advocacy tool for the promotion of early learning and preschool education, and it also ensures the monitoring and evaluation of quality services for young children and their parents.

The guiding principle of the Strategy is to ensure that all children in Montenegro, from birth to 6 years of age when they start primary education, will have received quality services for early development and preschool education in order to achieve their full potential and to become active and productive members of society.

The aim of the Strategy is to ensure accessible, high quality, comprehensive, culturally appropriate and inclusive services for all children in Montenegro, from birth until they enrol in primary school, with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable children.

The Strategy was developed for:

- All children in Montenegro to ensure the fulfilment of their rights;
- Parents and primary caregivers to create the conditions for responsible parenting and to offer a continuum of support;
- Personnel in preschool institutions in order to create a stimulating environment for children's development and education;
- Healthcare workers in order to create conditions for a healthy life for children;
- Social workers to ensure full social security and a good quality of life for all children;
- Policy makers to ensure the provision of essential preconditions and an enabling environment for children, in line with standards recommended by European Union;
- All citizens to give their full commitment to ensuring equal rights and opportunities for a good quality of life for all children, and therefore, for optimal human development in Montenegro.



Starting points of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education

The Early and Preschool Education Strategy (EPES) takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to the development of children from birth to the age of school entry, as well as to the support and empowerment of parents and guardians, helping them to understand the importance of a holistic approach to child development. Neurological research shows that approximately 80% of a child's brain develops most rapidly within the first three years of life, and an enabling home environment leads to the good development of the physical, cognitive, emotional and social potential of a child. Research also shows that good quality programmes for working with children of the youngest ages and their parents and guardians enables children to develop skills and values that are essential for their further development and progress. Moreover, studies by the World Bank and other research show that investments in the early stages of development and learning reduce later high costs for remedial or special education, health and nutrition care, social protection and justice-system services, thus contributing to achieving positive, sustainable and far-reaching social changes, greater national productivity, and better citizens in a democratic state.⁴

The Early and Preschool Education Strategy fits well into all relevant strategy papers at the national level, and it is also compatible with all related international instruments.

International documents

In the guide entitled "Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood"⁵ to General Comment No. 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), states are urged to develop rights-based, coordinated, and multi-sectoral strategies, particularly focusing on early education and development. Such strategies should be based on a systematic and integrated approach to law and policy development for all children up to 8 years old, implying a comprehensive framework for early childhood services, provisions and facilities, that are supported by information and monitoring systems, with the active involvement of parents and guardians in the planning of comprehensive services.

The first goal of the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), adopted in Jomtien (1990), calls for "expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children". However, the 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report highlighted that relatively little progress had been made in this area, and it urged countries to place a greater emphasis on early childhood.

⁴ Source: Why Should Montenegro Invest in the Early Development of Children?, Emily Vargas-Baron, March 2010.

⁵ Guide for General Comment 7: "Implementation of Child's Rights in Early Childhood", UN Committee, UNICEF, Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2006

A World Fit for Children, adopted in 2002 as a result of the Special Session of UN General Assembly devoted to children, set priorities including the promotion of healthy lifestyles and provision of quality education for every child.

The **UN Millennium Development Goals**, adopted in 2000 by 189 nations, provides a set of measurable, time-bound global goals for suppressing poverty, famine, diseases, and illiteracy by 2015. Targets under seven of the eight goals are relevant to early childhood development.

The **Salamanca Statement** (UNESCO, 1994) called for formal education institutions to find ways to successfully educate all children, including those with developmental delays and disabilities.

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979)** contains provisions that refer to protecting pregnant women and mothers, and to the importance of developing policies related to children and their parents.

National policy papers

A number of official documents at the national level govern certain sectoral and inter-sectoral issues regarding children from birth to 6 years of age, including early and preschool education.

The **Constitution of Montenegro (2007)**, as the highest legal instrument of the nation, guarantees children all rights and freedoms appropriate to their age and maturity. The Constitution enshrines: the right of the child to publicly-funded health protection; special care for the mother and the child; the creation of preconditions to increase the birth rate; special protection against psychological, physical, economic or any other form of exploitation or abuse of the child; as well as the right to education under terms of equality.

A number of sectoral policy papers and strategies also refer to the rights of the child and their protection:

- **The National Plan of Action for Children (2004-2010), the Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion (2007-2011), the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, the Strategy for Improving the Status of the RAE Population in Montenegro (2008-2012) and the Strategy on Regional Development (2005)** all focus on: extended preschool education coverage; the provision of educational programmes of high quality; protection against inequality; the right to access to quality education, and so on.
- **The Health Care Law⁶, the Health Insurance Law⁷**, and strategy papers in the area of health protection including: the Healthcare System Development Strategy (2003-2020), the Strategy to Improve Reproductive Health (2005), and the Food Safety Strategy (2006), govern access to healthcare for children and their rights to receive mandatory health insurance. They set the general goals for the enhancement of healthcare policy and practices with respect to family

⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 39/04č Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 14/10

⁷ Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 39/04

planning and responsible parenthood, reduction of health and social challenges, availability of services to various socio-economic layers of society, and so on.

- **The Family Law⁸, the Law on Social and Child Protection⁹, the Labour Law¹⁰**, and strategy papers including: **the Strategy for the Development of Social and Child Protection (2008-2012)** govern issues such as marriage and marital relations, the rights and responsibilities of parents and children, adoption, family placement, foster care, protection of children without parental care, children with physical, mental and sensory disabilities, abused and neglected children, protection of motherhood and the rights of the employed who are taking care of children. They are aimed at the development of an integrated social and child protection system, the effective delivery of services, improving institutional and human resource capacities, and so on.

Laws and policy papers in the area of education are based on the document entitled the **Book of Changes (2001)** that established Montenegro's vision and goals for education reform. It emphasised that the new education system must be compatible with strategic orientations for the development of a democratic, economically prosperous and open society that will be based on the rule of law, harmonious multiethnic co-existence, understanding and tolerance¹¹.

In line with the overall reform of the Montenegrin education system, the area of early and preschool education is governed by the: **General Education Law¹², Law on Preschool Education¹³, Law on Primary Education¹⁴, Law on Education for Children with Special Needs¹⁵, and Inspection Law¹⁶**. These laws provide a well-rounded framework for the early development of children from birth to six years of age. They focus on stimulating the development of individual abilities and characteristics; enrichment of early experiences through creating developmentally appropriate learning and development environments; the development of psycho-motor, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social abilities and skills; and by ensuring full inclusion in preschool groups, with the possibility of providing additional expert assistance, as needed.

The **Strategic Plan for Education Reform 2005-2009** and the **Strategy for Inclusive Education (2008)** set as priorities the improvement, extension and institutionalisation of the reformed concept of preschool education in all preschool institutions, including private initiatives. They provide for systemic and systematic support for child development in accordance with individual interests, abilities and needs. They view education as being not only the process of acquiring academic knowledge and achievements but also of acquiring skills and knowledge needed for daily life, with a focus on promoting proactive involvement in the community.

⁸ Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 78/05

⁹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 1/07

¹⁰ Official Gazette of Montenegro 49/2008; 26/2009

¹¹ Book of Changes, 2001.

¹² Official Gazette of Montenegro 45/10

¹³ Official Gazette of Montenegro 64/02, 49/07

¹⁴ Official Gazette of Montenegro 45/10

¹⁵ Official Gazette of Montenegro 45/10

¹⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 80/04



Analysis of the current situation in preschool education

This chapter presents an overview and analysis of the current status of preschool education and it serves as a basis for the definition of goals, tasks and activities of the Early and Preschool Education Strategy. The situation analysis includes: demographic trends; coverage of children by preschool education broken down into three categories: children of up to 3 years of age, children aged 3 to 5 years, and children from the age of 5 until they enter primary school; the network and facilities of preschool institutions; staff coverage and training, initial education and professional development; existing curricula for working with children in preschool institutions; inclusion of parents and guardians in preschool education; and methods and modes of financing preschool institutions.

Demographic trends

The annual birth rate in Montenegro in 2008 was 4.41. For the purpose of better planning investments in infrastructure, it is necessary to make projections and estimates regarding trends for growth in the annual birth of newborns in municipalities¹⁷. Although a trend in the increase of the annual birth rate has been noted at the regional level, (the highest in the central region and the lowest in the northern region), a variable number of newborns per municipality is noted. In the municipalities of Andrijevica, Mojkovac, Plav, Pljevlja/Zabljak¹⁸ and Danilovgrad, the trend is decreasing, while in Rožaje, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Nikšić, Podgorica, Bar, Budva, Kotor and Tivat, it is increasing. In other municipalities an increase in the annual number of newborn children has been noted, but it is not significant. Trends in the decrease in the number of births in some municipalities can be explained by population migration to the southern region and to larger towns in Montenegro, where people have more opportunities for education, employment and a better standard of living.

Coverage of children

Preschool education serves children up to 6 years of age (i.e. until they enrol in school)¹⁹. Nurseries serve children up to 3 years of age (36 months), and children aged 3 to 6 are served through kindergartens, divided into groups according to age. Montenegro has 21 preschool institutions, with a network of 96 educational departments with a total of 414 age groups organised within them. In the northern region there are 10 preschool institutions with 23 educational units; in the central region, 5 institutions with 44 units; and in the southern region, 6 institutions with 29 units.²⁰

¹⁷ The approximate trend of annual birth rate has been calculated by using the number of newborns in each municipality for the years 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008. Sources: "Health Statistical Yearbook", Institute for Public Health, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008.

¹⁸ One preschool institution covers the two municipalities of Pljevlja and Zabljak, and because of this they are presented together.

¹⁹ Primary (mandatory) education has been extended to nine years, thus children of 6 years of age are to enrol in primary school.

²⁰ Source: Ministry of Education and Sports

Total coverage of children by preschool education at the national level²¹

The total number of children enrolled in preschool institutions in Montenegro in the school year 2009/10 was 12,662. Given the total number of children up to 6 years of age in Montenegro (47,506), preschool education covers 26.65% of children (26.9% of boys and 26.38% of girls) during the school year 2009/2010.

Table 3 The number of preschool institutions, number of children in preschool, number of educational units, average number of children per educational unit, number of age groups, average number of children per age group by region and by municipality

Region	Municipality	No. of preschool institutions	No. of children in preschool institutions	No. of education units	Avr. No. of children per education unit	No. of age groups	Average no. of children per age group
Northern region	Andrijevića	1	35	1	35	3	11.7
	Berane	1	505	3	168.3	18	28.1
	Bijelo Polje	1	532	8	66.5	19	28
	Kolašin	1	163	1	163	5	32.6
	Mojkovac	1	140	1	140	5	28
	Plav	1	182	3	60.67	6	30.3
	Plužine	1	61	1	61	3	20.3
	Pljevlja and Žabljak	1	445	3	148.3	15	29.7
	Rožaje	1	153	1	153	5	30.6
	Šavnik	1	15	1	15	1	15
Total northern region		10	2,231	23	97	80	27.9
Central region	Cetinje	1	453	3	151	19	23.8
	Danilovgrad	1	256	4	64	9	28.4
	Nikšić	1	1,005	19	52.9	38	26.5
	Podgorica	2	4,959	18	275.5	140	35.4
Total central region		5	6,673	44	151.7	206	30.9
Southern / coastal region	Bar	1	559	7	79.9	21	26.6
	Budva	1	552	3	184	22	25.1
	Herceg Novi	1	1,022	5	204.4	28	36.5
	Kotor	1	721	7	103	30	24
	Tivat	1	521	3	173.7	14	39.5
	Ulcinj	1	383	4	95.8	13	29.5
Total southern region		6	3,758	29	129.6	128	29.4
Country total		21	12,662	96	131.9	414	30.6

In the school year 2009/2010, the average number of children per educational group was 30.6. This constitutes a clear deviation from the standards established by Article 24 of the Law on Preschool Education, which are as follows: for children up to 2 years of age – 12 children per group; for children from 2 to 3 years of age – 14; for children from 3 to 4 years of age – 20; for children from 4 to 5 years – 24; and for children from 5 to 6 years – 25 children per group. For mixed-age groups, norms for children up to 3 years of age are 10 children per group and for children from 3 to 6 years of age, 20 per group.

²¹ The source on the coverage of children in this and the other sections: Ministry of Education and Sports the source of the number of children: Statistical Office Montenegro (MONSTAT) – possible deviation 1%



Given the officially established standards and the actual average number of children per age group in the school year 2009/2010, there are clear deviations from the rules. This appears to be due to an inadequate capacity of preschool institutions to provide enough smaller classrooms, and the high level of demand by parents to enrol their children in preschool. Upon reviewing municipalities, a high level of overcrowdedness and deviation from the standard average number of children per age group is found in the following municipalities: Kolasin, Rozaje, Tivat, Podgorica and Herceg Novi. This indicates the priority need to expand preschool accommodation capacities in these municipalities. On the other hand, in the municipalities of Andrijevica and Šavnik, there is the issue of underused capacities, given that the average number of children per group is below established standards. Still, this low coverage may be caused by the dispersion of rural settlements and the distance to the closest preschool department, thus requiring the use of flexible modes of operation and service delivery. In the other 12 preschool institutions, there is also a deviation from the set standards when it comes to the average number of children per group, hence these municipalities also need to increase the number of their preschool facilities in order to expand their coverage of children.

Coverage of children up to 3 years of age

Nurseries are preschool institutions for children up to 3 years of age. They usually include children from 1 to 3 years of age, with a growing demand from parents and guardians to enrol children under 12 months old, most frequently due to economic factors, pressure from employers, and the mothers' need to keep their jobs. According to the Law on Preschool Education, day nurseries include two age groups, although some educational units divide children in three groups, due to having several children less than 12 months of age. Based on the analysis done by the Ministry of Education and Science for the school year 2009/10, 3,087 children up to 3 years of age were covered by day nurseries. Compared to the total number of children of this population (24,095), nurseries serve only 12.81% of this age cohort (12.59% of boys and 13.06% of girls).

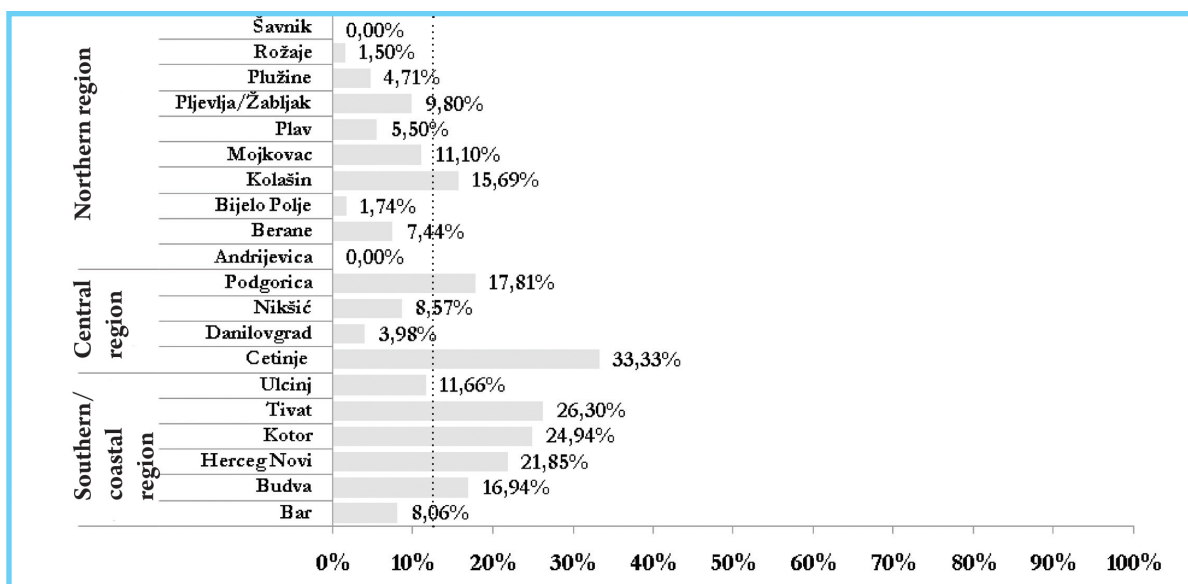
Table 4 Coverage of children up to 3 years of age by preschool education, by regions

Region	Total number of children under 3 in preschools			Total population of children under 3 in the country			Coverage of children (%)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Northern region	183	155	338	3,625	3,296	6,921	5.05%	4.7%	4.88%
Central region	922	913	1,835	6,150	5,575	11,725	14.99%	16.37%	15.65%
Southern region	487	427	914	2,872	2,577	5,449	16.96%	16.57%	16.77%
Total	1,592	1,495	3,087	12,647	11,448	24,095	12.59%	13.06%	12.81%

The data given in Table 4 shows that the coverage of children up to 3 years of age is lowest in the northern region, with 4.88% of the total age cohort (5.05% of boys and 4.7% of girls). In the central region, 15.65% of the children are covered (14.99% of boys and 16.57% of girls). The greatest coverage ratio of children up to 3 years of age is 16.77%, which is found in the southern region (16.96% of boys and 16.57% of girls).

Graph 1 depicts the coverage of children up to 3 years of age by nursery education and municipality, and the dotted line indicates the average coverage of this age cohort at the country level (12.81%). In municipalities within the southern region: Herceg Novi, Kotor, Tivat and Budva, the number of children in the preschool institutions higher than the national average. The data indicates that in the northern municipality of Kolašin, the coverage exceeds the national average. In the central region, the coverage of this population is higher than the country average in the municipalities of Cetinje and Podgorica. In the municipalities: Šavnik, Rožaje, Plužine, Pljevlja/Žabljak, Plav, Mojkovac, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Andrijevisa, Nikšić, Danilovgrad, Bar and Ulcinj the number of children served is lower than the national average. Here attention needs to be paid to the municipalities of Andrijevisa and Šavnik, where no children of this age group are enrolled in nurseries. To meet demand especially on the part of working mothers, flexible methods of work, the inclusion of children of the youngest ages in nurseries, and collaborations with parents and guardians in early education need to be developed rapidly.

Graph 1 Coverage of children up to 3 years of age by preschool (nursery) education, by municipalities



Coverage of children aged 3 to 5

Kindergartens are preschool institutions for children from 3 to 6 years (i.e. until starting primary school). They are divided into three age groups; children from 3 to 4 years (younger group), children from 4 to 5 years (intermediate group) and the third (older group) covers the children aged from 5 years up to school entry.²² Based on the analysis done by the Ministry of Education and Science for the school year 2009/10, 5,752 children from 3 to 5 years are covered by kindergartens. Compared to the total number of children of this population (15,044), kindergartens cover 38.23% of this age cohort (38.74% of boys and 37.68% of girls).

Table 5 Coverage of children from 3 to 5 years by preschool education, by region

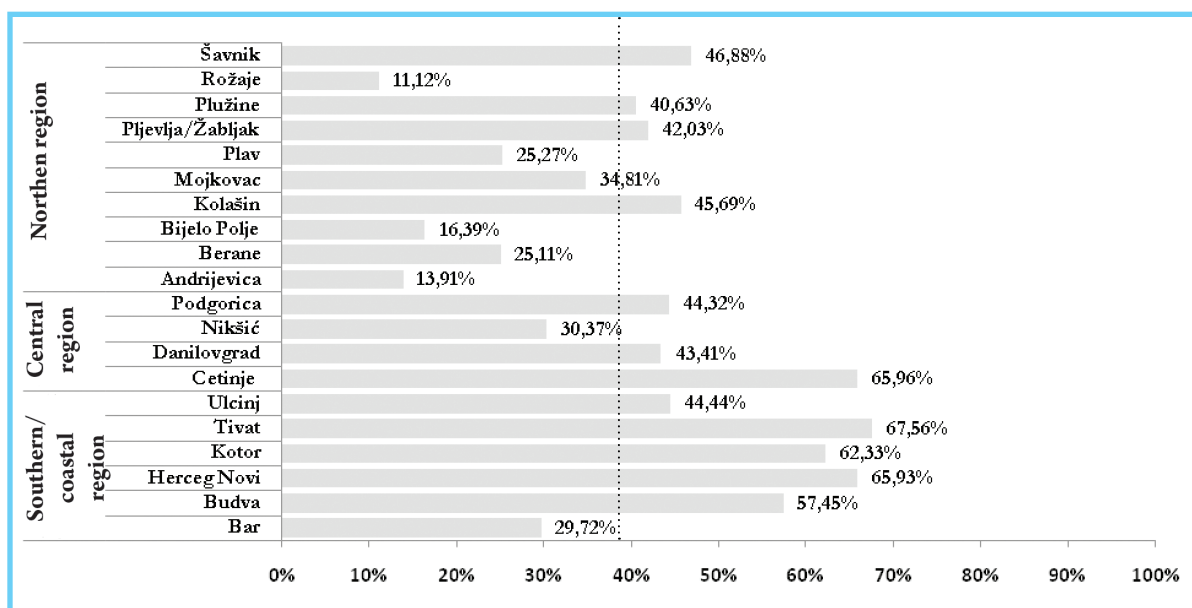
Region	Total number of children from 3 to 5 in preschools			Total population of children from 3 to 5 in the country			Coverage of children (%)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Northern region	578	524	1,102	2,457	2,157	4,614	23.52%	24.29%	23.88%
Central region	1,605	1,471	3,076	3,776	3,544	7,320	42.51%	41.51%	42.02%
Southern region	865	709	1,574	1,635	1,475	3,110	52.91%	48.07%	50.61%
Total	3,048	2,704	5,752	7,868	7,176	15,044	38.74%	37.68%	38.23%

Table 5 presents comparative data for the preschool coverage of children from 3 to 5 years of age by regions. The greatest coverage of this age cohort is encountered in the southern region – 50.61% of children (52.91% of boys and 48.07% of girls). Somewhat lower preschool coverage is encountered in the central region with 42.02% (42.51% of boys and 41.51% of girls). Compared with these two regions, preschool coverage in the northern region is significantly lower with 23.88% (23.52% of boys and 24.29% of girls).

Preschool coverage of children from 3 to 5 years of age by municipality is shown in Graph 2, and the dotted line indicates the average coverage of this age cohort at the country level (38.23%). In the central region, in the municipalities of Cetinje, Podgorica and Danilovgrad, coverage exceeds the country average, while the same applies to the southern municipalities of: Budva, Herceg Novi, Kotor, and Tivat (which has the highest rate at 67.56%). The fact that preschool coverage of this age cohort in the municipalities of Nikšić and Bar is below the country average may indicate, on one hand, scattered settlements within the territory of these two municipalities, and on the other hand, a lack of facilities in the urban areas of these municipalities. In the northern region, with the exception of the municipalities of Kolasin, Savnik, Pluzine and Pljevlja/Zabljak, the coverage of children aged 3 to 5 is below the national average. In the municipality of Rožaje, the one with the annual increase in the number of children, the preschool coverage of this age cohort is only 11.12%, with 30.6 children per group on average, clearly indicating the overcrowdedness of existing facilities. In other northern municipalities: Plav, Mojkovac, Bijelo Polje, Berane and Andijevica, various modalities need to be introduced to increase the availability of preschool services and expand the coverage of preschool-age children.

²² The coverage of children from 5 years of age until starting primary school will be presented separately given the significance of the transition period and the specific planning of tasks and activities that involve close cooperation with primary schools.

Graph 2 Coverage of children from 3 to 5 years of age by preschool education, by municipality



Coverage of children from 5 years of age to primary school enrolment

This transition period marks the link between preschool and primary school, since the preparation of children for school begins in preschool institutions. In the school year 2009/10, the preschool coverage of children from 5 years of age until entrance to primary school totalled only 3,823 children. Compared to the total population of children in this age band (8,367), only 45.69% of children of this age group are enrolled in kindergarten (47.2% of boys and 44.07% of girls). Analysing the coverage of children from 5 years to primary school entry by region shows that the greatest coverage is in the southern region – 65.23% of children (66.97% of boys and 63.41% of girls). The figures for the central region are somewhat lower, with a total coverage of 45.74% (48.27% of boys and 43.03% girls). However, the coverage is much lower in the northern region, being only 30.8% (30.95% of boys and 30.63% of girls).

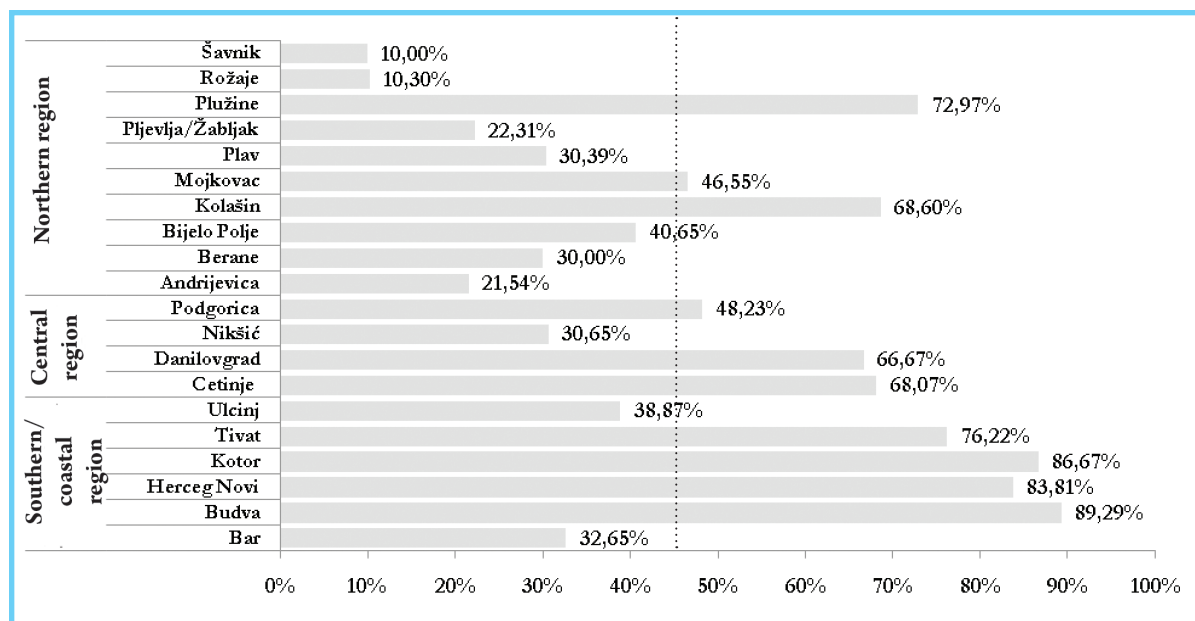
Table 6 Coverage by preschool education of children from 5 years of age until starting school, by region

Region	Total number of children aged from 5 until starting school in preschools			Total population of children from 5 until starting school in the country			Coverage of children (%)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Northern region	416	375	791	1,344	1,224	2,568	30.95%	30.63%	30.8%
Central region	963	799	1,762	1,995	1,857	3,852	48.27%	43.03%	45.74%
Southern region	667	603	1,270	996	951	1,947	66.97%	63.41%	65.23%
Total	2,046	1,777	3,823	4,335	4,032	8,367	47.2%	44.07%	45.69%



The coverage of children from 5 years of age until admission to primary school is shown in Graph 3, with the dotted line giving the average national coverage (45.69%). In the northern region, the coverage ratio exceeds the country average in the municipalities of Plužine, Mojkovac, and Kolašin, although it is lower in comparison to other regions. In the municipalities of the central region, the coverage is above the national average, except in Nikšić. In the southern region the coverage figures exceed the average ones in the municipalities of Herceg Novi, Kotor, Tivat, Budva (which has the highest rate of 89.29%). In the municipalities of Šavnik, Rožaje, Pljevlja/Žabljak, Plav, Bijelo Polje, Berane, and Andrijevica, the coverage is below the national average. The lowest coverage levels are recorded in the following municipalities: Rožaje, Pljevlja/Žabljak, Plav, Bijelo Polje, Berane; and then Andrijevica and Šavnik, which have the lowest coverage of only 10%.

Graph 3 Coverage by preschool education of children from 5 years of age until starting primary school, by municipality



Since the year before enrolling in primary school is very important for the proper adaptation of children to the school environment and the activities awaiting them, the greatest possible coverage of children of this age group in all municipalities needs to be ensured through various forms of preschool education services.

The difference in preschool coverage by region may be caused by specific socio-economic characteristics of the regions. The poverty rate of 8.9% is much greater in the northern region than in the other two regions. In the central region, the poverty rate is 3.5% and in the southern region, only 2.7%.²³ The unemployment rate may also be one of the causes, with the greatest unemployment rates in the northern region of 24.6%, with 16.3% in the central region, and the lowest in the southern region 8.6%. Another significant piece of information refers to the unemployment rate of women, which again is highest for the northern region, at 28.3%, followed by the central region at 18.2%, and the lowest being in the southern region with 6.9%.²⁴ Additional factors that may explain differences in preschool coverage by regions are dispersion of settlements in the northern region, remote villages without preschool facilities as well as a severe climate and poor transportation infrastructure that together negatively affect the enrolment of children in preschool institutions. Also, the region has a tradition of living in multigenerational, extended families in which grandparents take care of young children, and parents lack an awareness of the importance of early learning and preschool education.

Coverage by other forms of institutions serving preschool children²⁵

Due to the increasing demand and overt need for preschool institutions and the crowding in public preschools in urban areas of the central and the southern regions, during recent years an increasing number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have begun to offer preschool education services. The Ministry of Education and Sports has conducted activities to ensure that their work is in line with the law, and that they follow all previously adopted licensing procedures. To date, a total of only 13 such organisations have filed applications for licence, and they are from the municipalities of Podgorica and Bar. In the school year 2009/2010 they reported that they have served 196 children.²⁶

Coverage of Albanian-speaking children

Two preschool institutions with five education units conduct the preschool curriculum in Albanian, in Podgorica – Tuzi (1 educational unit) and in Ulcinj (4 educational units). Preschool education in Albanian is conducted in 9 age groups, covering a total of 222 children of preschool age.²⁷ These schools and children are included in the charts presented above.

²³ Source: Survey of Poverty in Montenegro in 2008, Statistical Office of Montenegro, MONSTAT, 2009

²⁴ Source: 2009 Statistical Yearbook, .Statistical Office, MONSTAT

²⁵ Source: Ministry of Education and Sports

²⁶ The exact number of NGOs involved and private preschools is not known, nor is the number of children they serve.

²⁷ Source: Ministry of Education and Sports database

Coverage of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) children

The figures on the total number and coverage of RAE children by preschool education in the school year 2008/2009 are shown below in Table 7²⁸:

The coverage of RAE population is 13.81%, or two times lower than the national average (26.65%). Looking at gender-segregated data, girls are somewhat more covered – 15.02%, compared to boys – 12.69%. It is noteworthy that in Podgorica, in a neighbourhood called Vrela Ribnička, there is an educational unit attended solely by RAE children (domicile and displaced from Kosovo). Given social inclusion principles, efforts are needed for a greater inclusion of RAE children in mixed preschools or for finding ways for the inclusion of children from the general population in the existing education unit at Vrela Ribnička. Within the very camp at Vrela Ribnička, to accommodate RAE internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo, the Red Cross of Montenegro set up one kindergarten with two age groups covered by two preschool teachers and two Roma assistants (who have undergone training for working with children). Given that most of these children are vulnerable, much more needs to be done to ensure their access to high-quality and inclusive nurseries and preschools.

Table 7 Coverage of RAE children per age groups: 1 to 3, 3 to 5, and from 5 until school attendance

Uzrast djeteta	Ukupan br. djece u JPU			Ukupan br. djece u Crnoj Gori			Obuhvat djece (%)		
	Br. dječaka	Br. djevojčica	Ukupno u JPU	Br. dječaka	Br. djevojčica	Ukupno u CG	Obuhvat dječaka	Obuhvat djevojčica	Ukupan obuhvat
Od 1 do 3 g.	5	6	11	316	283	599	1,58%	2,12%	1,84%
Od 3 do 5 g.	55	61	116	310	310	620	17,74%	19,68%	18,71%
Od 5 g. do polaska u osnovnu školu	61	64	125	327	279	606	18,65%	22,94%	20,63%
Ukupno	121	131	252	953	872	1.825	12,69%	15,02%	13,81%

Coverage of children with developmental disabilities

The process of reforming and setting up a multi-sectoral network of professional assistance and support for children with developmental delays and disabilities in collaboration with their parents and guardians has started at the local, regional and national levels. The network of services is envisaged as follows: the first information on a child's developmental delays and disabilities is usually received from parents or healthcare institutions, which then refer the parents and child to the Centre for Children with Special Needs (located within primary healthcare centres) and the Support Service to Children with Developmental Disabilities (within the Centre for Social Work of the municipality in which the child resides). It is envisaged that the Support Services will open a portfolio with relevant data for each child, and inform the parents and guardians of all the rights and services offered at the state, regional and local levels. Professionals at the Centre for Children with Special Needs are specialists for early detection, intervention and rehabilitation. The data regarding the developmental status of the child is sent to the Commission for Orientation, and with the close cooperation of the parents and guardians, it recommends to the parents the best preschool institution

²⁸ Database on the RAE population in Montenegro, Statistical Office of Montenegro, MONSTAT, 2009.



for the child. Preschool education should be available to each child, include an individual educational plan, and services should work closely with and provide support to the parents and caregivers. Parents and guardians are actively involved in planning, working with the child and monitoring his/her development. In line with the Strategy for Inclusive Education, resource centres are planned to be developed for certain types of developmental disabilities, in order to provide advisory support, education and additional support to children, families and professionals who work in the educational system.

There is no official data on the number of children with developmental disabilities in Montenegro. A total of 285 children with special needs attended preschools during the school year 2008/2009 (105 girls and 180 boys), and that number represents only 2% of the total number of children attending preschool.²⁹ The education groups attended by children with learning disabilities, which in addition to the preschool teacher and expert assistants, also have assistants who are provided in cooperation with the Employment Office, provide a noteworthy example of good practice. Their work is supervised and monitored by the preschool expert team.³⁰

It must be noted that many children with developmental delays and disabilities are not identified under the current system until they reach primary school. Therefore, the implementation of the Strategy on Inclusive Education will help to ensure cooperation among services for early childhood intervention that are so crucial during the period of early childhood development from birth to three years of age.

Children without parental care

Children without parental care are placed within the Public Institution Home for Children "Mladost" in Bijela, under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. Currently, there are 56 children of preschool age placed there, and preschool education services are provided within the same institution. Research is needed to see how many of these children are "social orphans," where family support might have helped to preserve the family unit and avoided the costly institutionalisation of infants and toddlers.

Preschool network and facilities³¹

The lack of premises (for education units) in urban areas is stated as the single most significant cause for the inadequate coverage of children with preschool education. Educational units occupy 75 separate buildings, of which 21 have been placed within the premises of primary schools. From 2001 to 2009 a total of 5 new preschool buildings were built in Montenegro: in Podgorica (2), Bar (1), Žabljak (1, as part of a preschool institution in Pljevlja), and Ulcinj (1).

²⁹ Source: Ministry of Education and Sports

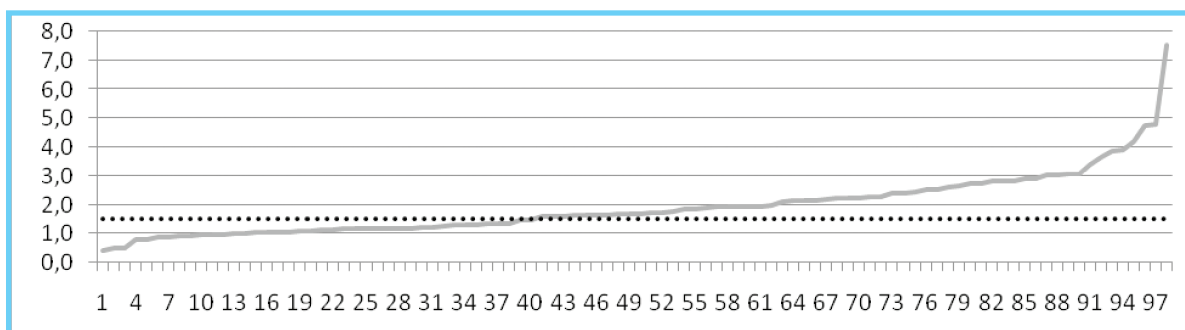
³⁰ "Djina Vrbica" Public Preschool Institution in Podgorica

³¹ Source: Ministry of Education and Sports

The total area of usable space in all preschools in Montenegro is 19,071m²; the average area of a workroom is 44m², or an average of 1.5m² per child. The average area per child deviates significantly from the set standard of 3m² per child.

Graph 4 shows the availability of floor area per child in each education unit, with the dotted line showing the country-level average area per child. It is evident that in the majority of education units the average area per child is between 1m² and 3 m². Overcrowdedness, insufficient floor area per child (under 1m²) is noticeable in the following education units: "Djina Vrbica", "Poletarac", "Jelena Četković", "Suncokret - Mataguži", "Zvezdani vrt - Golubovci", "Dječja radost – Tuzi", "Jelena Četković" (PPI "Djina Vrbica", Podgorica) and "Bajka", "Pčelica" (PPI "Ljubica Popović", Podgorica). The floor area per child exceeding the set minimum of 3m² is encountered in the education units: "Bubamara" (PPI "Dušo Basekić", Bijelo Polje), "Žukotrlica", "Virpazar" (PPI "Vukosava Ivanović-Mašanović", Bar), "Žabljak" (PPI "Dječji vrtić" Pljevlja) and "Prčanj" (PPI "Radost", Kotor), PPI "Sestre Radović" (Kolašin), and educational units in PS "Janko Mićunović" and PS "Radoje Čizmović" (PPI "Dragan Kovačević", Nikšić).

Graph 4 Overview of m² per child in education units, the x-axis shows education units, and on the y-axis is m² per child



A total of 13 buildings have a room for joint activities with average area of 87 m². Currently, libraries exist in only 8 out of the total of 96 educational units. Regarding playgrounds of preschool institution units, 90 of them are not properly equipped nor adjusted to the age of children, 40 out of them are not properly prepared for use, while 9 do not possess any fences.

Such data only reconfirms the need for the acquisition of new facilities to increase the number of children covered by preschool education, and also to relieve the existing units, in particular in urban areas in the central and southern regions.

Staff members of preschool education institutions

In preschool institutions, the personnel structure includes the teaching staff (in charge of the direct work with children: teachers and nurses), professional services (professionals of various backgrounds such as psychologists, pedagogues, therapists and other experts who work with children with developmental delays or disabilities, nutritionists, and others), and administrative and support staff (persons taking care of management, hygiene, safety and food safety). Nurses are in charge of childcare, while the teacher is in charge of education and should provide stimulating and developmentally-appropriate activities. A team consisting of a nurse and a preschool teacher leads day nursery groups. Teams of two preschool teachers per each age group conduct educational activities with children from 3 to 6 years of age. Support staff members provide supervision and professional support to nurses and teachers.

In the school year 2009/10³², the total number of teaching staff was: preschool teachers - 829 and nurses - 185, or 67% of the total staff employed in the preschool education system. Given the total number of 12,662 children served by preschool institutions (school year 2009/2010), the overall teacher/pupil ratio is 1 teacher per 15.27 children. As for the administrative staff, each preschool institution has its director and, depending on its size, other administrative staff members (deputy director, secretary and accountant). There is a very low percentage of expert assistants and, according to the most recent data, a total of 12 pedagogues, 4 psychologists, 5 speech therapists, 2 defectologists and 5 nutritionists work in the preschools. The number of support staff managing food, hygiene and security services depends on the number of children and the size of the institution. To ensure the improvement of the early education process and the provision of appropriate developmental activities for children with developmental delays and disabilities, a greater number of expert assistants will need to be hired.

Initial staff training³³

In 2004 the programme of pre-service studies for preschool teachers was reorganised in line with the Bologna principles, and changed from a two-year programme to an applied three-year programme. Accordingly, the curriculum was adapted, aligned with modern trends in preschool education, with a total of 34 one-semester study courses. Most of the curriculum is focused on working with children from age 3 to enrolment in primary school, and to a much lesser degree, it includes methodologies and support strategies for children under 3 years of age. After the completion of basic studies, as of 2007, graduate students have the opportunity to enrol in two-year specialist studies that offer 10 developed syllabi. There is a possibility of further education, in line with the Bologna principles, for preschool teachers who had previously graduated from the traditional two-year course of studies.

Following a labour market needs analysis, since 2005 the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Montenegro has reduced admission rates for the Preschool Teacher Training Department, resulting in the enrolment of only 39 students in the school year 2009/2010.

³² Source: data from the Ministry of Education and Sports, June 2010.

³³ Source: University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philosophy, Nikšić

Nurses who are employed in kindergartens have graduated from secondary vocational medical schools, and as a rule, from their paediatric departments.

Data obtained from the Employment Office of Montenegro indicates that in 2010, the following professionals were registered as unemployed: 156 preschool teachers (two-year study programme); 51 preschool teachers (three-year study programmes); 15 psychologists; 2 speech therapists; 7 rehabilitation and education experts; 27 pedagogues; 2 special pedagogues, and 11 social workers.³⁴ This appears to indicate that the existing prospective personnel available in the labour market may be adequate to meet current requirements for the initial expansion of facilities. However, the future expansion of early and preschool educational services will require the education of more professionals as well as their preparation for working within the area of early education.

Professional development of already employed staff

The professional development and individual advancement of preschool teachers and other professional staff members, as well as the improvement of the quality and efficiency of the preschool system is the responsibility of the Continuous Professional Development Department of the Bureau for Educational Services. Training programmes for the professional development of teaching staff are accredited by the Bureau's Commission, and verified by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The Bureau for Educational Services chooses programmes following a public tender and enters them into the Catalogue of Programmes for the Professional Development of Teachers. Attending such accredited programmes is one of the criteria for professional advancement in line with the Rulebook on the Types of Titles, Requirements, Method and Procedure for Awarding Teacher Titles.³⁵ Preschool teachers have undergone several training programmes, with the support of international organisations, such as: **Step by Step – Kindergarten as a Family Centre; Parents and Preschool Teachers in Action – education on the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Inclusive Education; Environmental Education for Children; Healthy Lifestyles for Children; Kindergarten as an Education Centre – Roma Included; Training for Preschool Teachers to Work in the First Grade of Nine-Year Primary Schools** and **A Holistic Approach to Early Childhood Education**.³⁶

Work programmes of preschool institutions

Good teaching programmes suited to the children's ages and their successful delivery is one of the key aspects of good quality preschool education. In early 2004 the General Education Council adopted the **Programme Bases and Programme for Preschool Education Activities**, which are the programme orientations for curriculum development at the preschool institution level, as well as for the development of specialised, targeted

³⁴ Source: Employment Agency of Montenegro

³⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro 10/04

³⁶ Source: Ministry of Education and Sports

and shorter programmes. This programme offers fundamental principles, goals, and didactic recommendations for the work of preschool teachers, methods of planning and evaluation. Preschool teachers are given autonomy to implement their work plan with a group and to adjust their activities to the needs and characteristics of the children, parents' demands and the local and social environment. For children in nurseries, the programme is not separate at this time but rather it is incorporated into the target programme reference framework. A preschool teacher is to keep a special portfolio for each child, including the description of achievements and the progress made by the child.

Special attention is paid to the inclusion of children with special learning needs and to monitoring them regularly. General guidance for working with children with learning disabilities is provided, as well as for working with gifted children. An English language programme is also included. In 2010 the General Education Council adopted additional specialised programmes which it is planned will be introduced in all preschool institutions in Montenegro, including: visual arts workshops, music workshops, drama workshops, mathematics workshops, environmental workshops and English language workshops.

The Bureau for Education is currently analysing existing preschool education programmes in cooperation with preschool institutions. Based on analyses of field data obtained, the existing programme of working with children in preschools will be improved. Moreover, a team of experts has been established to work on the development of programmes for children from birth up to 3 years of age.³⁷

It is envisaged that the monitoring and evaluation of work with children and of preschool institutions will be done internally and continuously by pedagogues or psychologists. Since specialists with these profiles do not exist in all institutions, this internal monitoring arrangement will not always be possible. Overall monitoring and evaluation of the functioning of preschool institutions has been carried out by supervisors and advisers from the Bureau for Education at specific intervals. This system of monitoring and evaluation and the process of in-service training need to be further analysed, developed and improved in the near future.

Currently, each preschool institution keeps a journal as a form of continuous monitoring of institutional activities, of cooperation with parents and the local community, and of special achievements of the children and the preschool. Of course, this is insufficient but it helps to provide some types of input for more formal, objective and thorough monitoring and evaluation activities. Also, it will be important to add regularly scheduled parental oversight activities to ensure that parents participate on a regular basis in the evaluation process.

³⁷ Source: Bureau for Education

Participation of parents and guardians

Given the importance of parents' active involvement in enhancing their children's development and enriching their learning processes, cooperation with the family is highlighted as a special feature of the **Programme for Areas of Activity in Preschool Education**. This cooperation includes: direct communications with parents (individual interviews, preschool visits, home visits, meetings with parents); direct parent involvement (staying within the group, volunteering, regular oversight of preschool services, technical and logistic support); and written communications and joint activities of children and parents (cultural, sport, entertainment and key learning activities). In practice, the most commonly used methods are individual interviews, technical and logistic assistance, support of parents and guardians in arranging day trips, summer holidays, visits to cultural, historic and educational institutions, as well as participation in events prepared by the preschool. Nevertheless, apart from several initiatives targeting parental education at the preschool level, parents are little motivated to receive this type of support. Experiences from other countries have shown parents' readiness to learn how they can contribute to stimulate their children's development. Therefore, it is important to raise the awareness of parents and primary caregivers about all aspects of early and preschool development and education, parental skills that contribute to the achievement of the full potential of the child and his/her readiness for further education, as well as modalities for parents' active participation in preschools.

In 2009, UNICEF³⁸ conducted a survey on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of parents and guardians of children up to 6 years of age. Regarding the development of stimulating activities with children, survey results showed that 73% of parents and guardians state that they do play with their children, 72% tell stories to their children, 68% sing songs together, 64% read books to their children and/or look at children's picture books together, 59% draw with their children, and 54% spend time with their children engaging in some form of learning activities (such as counting, naming things, and so on). As for the importance of preschool education, 78% of parents and guardians say it is important for their child to be involved; the same view is expressed by only 44% of RAE parents and guardians. The opinion of parents and guardians as to the best type of childcare before starting school is as follows: 53% of parents and guardians say it is provided by public education institutions, 25% believe that grandparents provide the best care for the child, 13% opt for "private kindergartens", 2% for "nannies", and 6% did not respond. Parents and guardians state the following reasons for involving their children in preschool education: socialising with their peers (83%); learning to share with others (41%); group play with peers (29%); and it is a safe and secure place for the child (26%). These results demonstrate the importance of informing parents about the great value of early childhood development and stimulation, and about their roles as the first teachers of their children, especially given rapid brain growth during the early years.

³⁸ "Assessment of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour Related to Care for Children" (KAP), UNICEF, 2009, Montenegro. The survey used a sample of 1,000 parents and guardians from the general population in the whole territory of Montenegro and 200 RAE parents .

Preschool financing³⁹

Out of the total state budget appropriations for all levels of education, 8.87% was allocated for preschool education in 2007, in 2008 - 9.22%, and in 2009 - 9.76%. There is an evident increase in allocations for preschool education, and Montenegro is on its way to achieving the level of 14% of its education budget dedicated to early childhood education. According to the report by the Ministry of Education and Sports, around 80% of the budget allocations for preschool education are spent on salaries and other remunerations⁴⁰, while the remaining is spent on current maintenance, teaching materials, other services and capital expenditures.

Enrolment in preschools is theoretically offered to all children of preschool age. Parents participate through paying for food costs at an amount of 1.80 a day, or on average 36 per month. The children whose parents are beneficiaries of Family Cash Benefits pay only half of the expected amount.

The existing laws in the area of education,⁴¹ as well as those in the area of local government organizations have not as yet defined the roles and responsibilities of local governments in regard to preschool education. However, some of the local governments have allocated funds, mostly for refurbishment, and thus in recent years some municipalities have made contributions of funds for: replacing old equipment; painting; providing thermal insulation of walls; improving heating systems; providing playing equipment for preschool playgrounds; constructing new sewerage systems, and so on. Therefore, the role of local government in the area of early and preschool education needs to be defined with respect to assessing the needs of the local population and developing and supporting early and preschool services. In addition, international organisations support various types of training and improvements in preschool education. Some preschool institutions use these donations and sponsorships to refurbish their premises, purchase didactic materials and provide professional development for the improvement of their teaching and non-teaching staff members.

³⁹ Source: Ministry of Education and Sports

⁴⁰ Average net monthly salaries in preschool institutions: preschool teacher - €390.47č nurses – €342.44 and professional support staff – €435.24

⁴¹ Law on General Education (Official Gazette of Montenegro 45/10), article 136a covering the financing of the local government.



Overview: Positive aspects of the existing system of early and preschool education and aspects that need improvement

Positive aspects of previous experiences and activities

- A more flexible organization of work has been introduced, and early and preschool institutions have become more sensitive to the needs of families;
- The early and preschool education curriculum ensures the autonomy of the caregivers, the ability to adapt the educational process to the individual needs of each child; it also sets a framework for work with parents;
- Specialized programmes are officially approved;
- Parents are more interested in involving children in early and preschool education;
- More children with developmental disabilities are included in preschools;
- Initial education of child caregivers has improved; three-year applied and specialized studies for preschool education have been established; the Masters programme is in the process of being formulated; methods of inclusive education are included as a mandatory subject/class;
- A framework for the professional development of teachers and other related matters has been developed;
- Training for the use of active, holistic, and individualised approaches for working with children has been implemented, as well as for the inclusion of children with special needs;
- Requirements for the achievement of a good transition between preschool education and early development and primary education have been developed through partnerships established between preschool institutions and primary schools;
- Mandatory and compulsory primary school education has been extended to nine years, with children enrolling in primary school at the age of six, and with an emphasis on teamwork between preschool and primary school teachers in the first grade of primary school.
- Increased openness toward the local self-governance of preschools has been promoted, and local governments are increasingly investing in preschool reconstruction, equipment, etc.

Aspects that need improvement

- According to the situation analysis of the early and preschool education system, one of the priorities will be to increase the coverage of children and expand the existing physical capacity of preschool institutions through increasing the number of facilities in targeted municipalities and developing various models of services to meet the needs of different regions and communities;
- The coverage of children from marginalized and vulnerable groups should be given priority and greatly increased, including: children from RAE populations and migrant groups; children with and at risk of developmental delays and disabilities; children from families living in poverty; children without parental care; and children living in remote rural areas;
- The harmonization of legal regulations at all levels of services should be improved, as well as the improvement of inter-sectoral coordination and cooperation through the establishment of formal inter-institutional agreements, as needed, especially in the area of promoting the involvement of children from the most vulnerable groups in preschool institutions, in line with the decentralization process to enhance local government involvement in early and preschool education as well as in education and support for parents;
- Special emphasis should be placed on defining more precisely the legal regulations for early childhood education that are related to local government, with the aim of achieving greater decentralization and increased community support for preschools and parent education, from birth up to six years of age;
- Within the framework of educational reform activities, a greater emphasis should be placed on early and preschool education, on the affirmation of professional assistants' programmes, as well as on volunteering at the community level;
- Encourage the development of improved models of services for children of preschool age through establishing regulations and standards for the development and licensing of private initiatives;
- Various models of cooperation, support and participation with parents should be improved or developed;
- Databases and records regarding children should be improved and developed, including the establishment of efficient mechanisms for functional data collection, inter-sectoral data exchange, and data analysis, interpretation and reporting;
- Research should be promoted in order to better understand the importance of early learning and development, the contribution of education to social inclusion, improved methodologies of work with children and the development of an efficient monitoring and evaluation system;

- Enhance publishing activities in the area of early childhood development and education;
- Continue the process of decentralization, including the transfer of responsibilities from the central to the local level in the area of education; and
- Continuous collaboration with the media should be developed to promote greater understanding regarding the importance of early development and learning.



Strategic development goals for early and preschool education

The system of early and preschool education will be organized as a decentralized and democratic system, with the aim of promoting the autonomy of preschool institutions and professionals and of establishing partnerships with families and local communities.

Services for early and preschool education and the early development of children until they enrol in school and for their parents and guardians will be guided by:

- **The principle of universal services:** all children and their parents and guardians will have equal rights and access to high-quality services of early and preschool education, with full participation, inclusion, respect for their wishes and privacy, as a cornerstone of all services. Full coordination and cooperation will be established with health services, with a special emphasis on nutrition and hygiene, as well as social protection services.
- **The principle of a comprehensive approach:** early teaching will be individualized, and it will include activities to encourage cognitive, social and emotional development; the development of language skills; physical development; perceptual development; the acquisition the skills for self-help and self-regulation, including key skills for the development of a positive self-concept, self-confidence, independence, the ability to resolve challenging situations well and of respect for diversity.
- **The principle of equality:** respect for the culture of every family will be ensured, as well as respect for and the use of home languages in all services along with the progressive introduction of bilingualism, once key concepts have been learned in the home language, and during the transition year of preschool education as an introduction to bilingualism in primary school. Special attention will be given to supporting the most vulnerable children including: marginalized ethnic groups; families with children who live in poverty; children with developmental delays and disabilities; children assessed to be at high risk; and children living in remote, rural areas through early childhood intervention and using individualized and intensive approaches, that are implemented in the child's primary and natural surroundings.
- **The principle of quality:** services of early and preschool education will be organized in friendly, safe and clean environments, which will enable children, parents and guardians to gain new skills for improving child development. Pre-service education of early childhood personnel will be specialized, and it will ensure they gain the knowledge, skills and competencies of professionals, with continuous possibilities for promotion and further in-service professional development. New and improved services will be developed, including new educational materials, manuals, research, and innovations.

The guiding principle and the aim of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education

The guiding principle - All children in Montenegro, from birth until they enrol in primary school, will be provided with quality services for early development and learning, in order to achieve their full potential and become active and productive members of the society, through a gradual and planned process to: increase the rate of coverage of children; empower parents; ensure curricula are adjusted to children's developmental needs; target services towards vulnerable children; and ensure all services are implemented by well-trained caregivers and other professionals.

The aim - The system of early and preschool education will fulfil requirements to ensure the provision of accessible, high quality, comprehensive, culturally appropriate and inclusive services for all children in Montenegro, from birth until they enrol in primary school, with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable children.

Objectives of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education

These objectives must be implemented in order to achieve the above-stated goal of early and preschool education in Montenegro.

Objective 1. To increase the coverage of children through the system of early and preschool education, for all children and their parents and guardians, through expanding physical capacities and ensuring the development of diverse and expanded models of services of early and preschool education.

Objective 2. To develop a system of continuous improvement, monitoring and innovation for quality with regard to early and preschool education services.

Objective 3. To improve and develop a comprehensive system of pre-service education for professional staff working in the early and preschool education system, and to create possibilities for their continuous professional development.

Objective 4. To ensure multidisciplinary, well-coordinated and sustainable cooperation within the entire system in order to improve the social inclusion of all children up to the age when they enrol in primary school.

Objective 5. To fully harmonize normative acts and regulations, with the aim of establishing a comprehensive system of early and preschool education and providing diverse support for the development of all children before they enrol in primary school.

Objective 6. To ensure the advocacy and promotion of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education through the active involvement of the media and other forms of social communication.

Ways to achieve the objectives of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education

Objective 1. To increase the coverage of children by the system of early and preschool education, for all children and their parents and guardians, through expanding physical capacities and ensuring the development of diverse and expanded models of services of early and preschool education.

The system of early and preschool education services must be prepared to receive all children, their parents and guardians, so that all children will have equal access to quality early and preschool education in order to achieve the full potential of all children and prepare them for success in school. In the line with the Millennium Development Goals, Montenegro plans to achieve at least 40% coverage of girls and boys within the early and preschool education system by 2015.

To achieve this goal, it will be necessary to increase the coverage of children by expanding, renovating and constructing needed physical facilities, achieving optimum working conditions, and by observing pedagogical norms for work with children. Specifically, the trend of an increase in the number of children per municipality, the average number of children in groups and the reduced physical area per child in preschool institutions show that there is a need to expand preschool capacities and, as a priority issue, to increase the number of groups in institutions. Increases in coverage can also be achieved through the introduction of more flexible models of services (specialized and shorter programmes, Toy and Book Libraries⁴², interactive services for remote, rural areas⁴³, and so on).

It is necessary to develop new services, such as Toy and Book Libraries, within preschool institutions, that will ensure a stimulating environment is provided for each child. These libraries will be equipped with developmentally appropriate toys and books, literature for parents, as well as other didactic materials for learning and development, which the parents will be able to take out and use for a certain period of time. Professional staff will be hired in the Toy and Book Libraries to provide training for parents and guardians through practical demonstrations and presentations on how to use developmentally appropriate materials and activities, in order that parents and guardians may be able to improve their skills in working with children.

Special attention should be given to preschool units in rural areas, and especially remote ones, where currently no preschool units exist. For families and children living in those regions, early and preschool education services will be provided by means of establishing interactive centres for parents and children, which will be located in the

⁴² Toy and Book Libraries will serve parents and guardians of children from birth up to 6 years of age and provide developmentally appropriate materials, toys and books, as well as information on how to stimulate child development, including demonstrations and practice. In Toy and Book Libraries the parents will be able to borrow toys, children's books and other developmentally appropriate materials free of charge and get instructions for their use from skilled professionals.

⁴³ Interactive services will be organised within preschool institutions that serve identified children in remote, rural areas. Specially trained preschool teachers will provide home-visiting activities and education for parents in those remote, rural areas. Interactive services will also serve as a link to health and social welfare services.

closest preschool unit. Preschool teachers will be engaged to work in these interactive services for children and parents, and they will make home visits to families and children in rural regions, promote programmes and activities for the good development of children in all areas including health, nutrition, safety and hygiene, and they will instruct parents about how to monitor child development and other matters. In their work, they will collaborate closely with preschool institutions, Toy and Book Libraries and other nearby services such as health and social work centres. Coverage of the children and the quality of these services will be monitored and evaluated.

It is necessary to develop mechanisms that will ensure the full participation of children from the most marginalized and vulnerable groups of the population in the system of early and preschool education. The preschool institutions need to provide interdisciplinary early educational approaches and establish efficient cooperation with professionals from other relevant sectors. Assistants and volunteers will be offered additional education to ensure that their work proves to be efficient. They will also provide support for professionals working with vulnerable groups of children.

The number of children served by early and preschool education will be increased through implementing specialized and shorter programmes for parents and children together within preschool institutions. Specialized programmes provide an opportunity for children to be involved in activities that interest them. Shorter programmes offer educational activities for children who attend early and preschool education part-time. It is important to pay special attention to the transition period, which involves children from 5 to 6 years of age and their parents. It is recommended that all children from age 5 to school entry at 6 years of age be included in the shorter programmes, in order to prepare them adequately for school. Specialized and shorter programmes will be organised during the afternoon hours.

The inclusion of civil society initiatives in the institutional framework of preschool education will increase the coverage of children and will allow for the qualitative monitoring of services. It is necessary to ensure that the licensing process for private initiatives is easier, to establish optimal standards of work and to provide a proper monitoring system of educational quality. Public-private partnerships will be developed in order to provide better early and preschool education for all children and families. However, it is important to allow for and officially approve the educational activities of civil sector organisations and, through decentralisation mechanisms, to delegate part of the process of accountability to local governments.

Objective 2. To develop a system of continuous improvement, monitoring and innovation for quality with regard to early and preschool education services.

In order for all children in Montenegro to achieve their full potential and become active and productive members of society, it will be necessary to create a positive learning environment from the very birth of the child. This can be achieved through developmentally appropriate, goal-oriented and well-structured curricula, as well as through a process of continuous monitoring and promotion of innovation within the system of early and preschool education.

The period from birth to three years of age is of critical importance for ensuring a good foundation for later child development. With regard to services provided for children up to the age of 3, it is necessary to develop a targeted and structured curriculum, with recommended, suitable learning and play materials and activities. It is also necessary to improve and modernize the existing curricula for children from 3 to 6 years of age, in order to further develop the capacities and potential of children. The professional autonomy of preschool teachers will be fully respected in order to individualize the educational process in accordance with the specific needs of the child in the given context. They will achieve that through adequate, developmentally appropriate activities and methodological strategies, using high-quality materials, toys and books for learning. It is important to prepare manuals for staff members, instruments to monitor each child's development and evaluations of programme goals and impacts. Elements of the culture and languages of minorities, gender equality and other issues related to diversity should be included as an integral part of the programme, thus ensuring that the ethnic origin of the child becomes a guide for all early education and development work. A special focus will be placed on the development of psychosocial support programmes for the most vulnerable group of children and their parents and caregivers. In addition, it will be necessary to enable parents and guardians to receive greater support within each family's home environment in order to strengthen their skills in stimulating the cognitive, language, motor, social and emotional development of their children through play. It will be important to raise the awareness of parents and guardians regarding the importance of early learning and development. New programmes and materials for parents will be tested in the field and adapted to fit their needs. It will also be important to improve the communication between parents and caregivers and preschool institutions, and to encourage a more active involvement of parents in the work of preschool institutions. It is also important to encourage and support publishing activities in the area of early childhood development and education.

In order to meet the specific interests and needs of children and parents, it will be necessary to develop new, specialized and shorter programmes for parent education and child development, with the aim of satisfying the interests and needs of each child. They should involve the development and acquisition of knowledge and skills in home settings as a support to the overall development of the child.

The transition to primary school represents a period of adjustment to new conditions, people, expectations and achievements for both children and parents, and it usually entails feelings of insecurity and fear. It will be necessary to develop a shorter plan and programme for children from the age of 5 to school age, in order to prepare all children more efficiently for school. Emphasis should be given to strengthening the cooperation and flow of information between preschool institutions and primary schools, as well



as to planning for their joint activities. In addition, it will be necessary to design a structured system for informing parents and guardians about how to prepare their children adequately for primary school. All activities and programmes will be oriented to overall child development, health, and nutrition, injury prevention, non-violent conflict resolution, and education for peace.

It will be very important to define and monitor the quality of the system for early and preschool education. It will be necessary to establish a sustainable, innovative and flexible system of monitoring and evaluation, in accordance with new scientific trends and evidenced-based results. Because the Bureau for Education represents the competent institution for the definition of quality and quality assurance in the system of early and preschool education, it will be necessary to expand and strengthen its capacities to assume additional duties within the system of early and preschool education. The Bureau's new duties will include the following: development of new programmes; promotion of innovative methods and techniques for working with children; adapting self-assessment models to preschool institutions; improving quality standards; and implementing research projects. In accordance with these duties, it will be necessary to develop and implement a new system of supervision, which will ensure a high quality of early and preschool education. It will be necessary to strengthen the role of pedagogical-psychological services in preschool institutions, in order to ensure their active participation in innovation and the development of curricula, staff support, monitoring of development and improvements in work with children. Parents and guardians will actively participate in the entire monitoring and evaluation system of early and preschool education.

Within the Ministry of Education and Sports, it will be necessary to develop a database that uses operational indicators, which will be accessible, functional, applicable and adapted to the needs of the system of preschool education and early development. It will also be important to maintain a centralized system of data gathering and entry through the development of "an electronic enrolment card" with a unique code for each child that will provide the basis for efficient monitoring of the system and the tracking of each child through all levels of education.

The recommendation is to plan for the establishment of an Institute for Early Childhood Development, as a specialised institution for the most important developmental period of the life. The establishment of the Institute will ensure the knowledge, skills and competencies of professionals; provide sustainable opportunities for continuous professional development; create conditions for the development of innovative services; develop manuals, guides and educational materials; translate and publish relevant ECD literature; and conduct research and evaluation studies.



Objective 3. To improve and develop a comprehensive system of pre-service education for professional staff working in the early and preschool education system, and to create possibilities for their continuous professional development.

It will be necessary to improve pre- and in-service education and professional development as well as upgrade plans and programmes of basic studies in line with international experiences through the mandatory introduction of a curriculum for children from birth up to 3 years of age. It will be necessary to introduce a programme for working with children up to the age of 3 years at the level of specialized and Masters studies.

The system for continuous professional development needs to be improved, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of the teaching staff through the acquisition new knowledge, skills and competencies, based on the process of self-assessment, analysis and needs assessment. Training should be used to improve and modernize the approaches for working with children up to the age of 3, and then with children from 3 to 6 years of age and for working with parents and guardians, as well as for implementing new, specialized and shorter programmes.

Professional staff that will be hired for implementing Toy and Book Libraries must be trained to work with parents and guardians through practical demonstrations and presentations on the use of developmentally appropriate materials and activities, in order that parents may improve their parenting skills in all regions of Montenegro. Caregivers working in the interactive services will be trained to conduct home visits with families and children in remote, rural areas; promote programmes and activities; use informal learning methods with children; and instruct parents and guardians regarding how to observe child development and improve their parenting knowledge and skills in all relevant areas.

Special attention should be given to meeting needs to improve the knowledge and skills of nurses, nutritionists, and cooks/chefs and other members of staff, in order to ensure quality nutrition, health and childcare services. A plan and programme will be established for training volunteers, assistants for working with children of specific ages and collaborators for contacts with the secondary school education system, and a competent institution will certify them.

During the process of introducing new knowledge, skills and competencies, emphasis should be placed on understanding and respecting diversity, explaining the importance of the socio-cultural dimension of early and preschool education and basing it on reciprocal relationships between adults and children.

For all of the abovementioned training, special manuals and materials will be developed and used. The training programme will define clearly the roles and responsibilities, qualifications regarding basic training, and detailed plans for further professional development for all disciplines and levels of training.

Objective 4. To ensure multidisciplinary, well-coordinated and sustainable cooperation within the entire system in order to improve the social inclusion of all children up to the age when they enrol in primary school.

The Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare will sign a multi-sectoral agreement in order to achieve close cooperation with public health institutions and centres for social work and to establish connections with the services they provide. At the same time, a mechanism and system for active and more efficient data exchange will be established.

Children who are identified as having development difficulties or children at risk will be provided with intensive and individualized early childhood intervention services (focused on children up to 3 years of age). For early childhood intervention services, operational policies and procedures will be defined in order to ensure that they correspond to the needs of families and children in Montenegro. These services must be of the highest possible quality, and they will be delivered in collaboration with health and social protection services. Staff working in nurseries will be additionally trained by international specialists in this field and by specialists from the Centres for Children with Special Needs. They will also be trained to provide support and training for parents both through home visits and centre-based gatherings of parents. Preschool institutions will prepare educational materials for early learning that will be shared with parents and caregivers through selected paediatricians, and good cooperation will be established with the health services. They will also jointly provide collaborative activities for children and their parents, such as workshops, meeting groups and so on.

The programme “School for Pregnant Women” needs to be expanded to the most vulnerable groups in order to help all pregnant women and their partners to become more skilled in providing care and psychosocial stimulation of their newborns and to be well prepared for their new tasks as parents. Similarly, the provision of services for reproductive health will be focussed on vulnerable groups. It is important to prepare, design and distribute specific educational materials for pregnant women of these families.

The patronage services within the public health centres provide early post-natal home visits to support mothers, newborns and families, but they need to be enhanced to ensure full support is given to marginalised and vulnerable groups of children and families. The system of early and preschool education, in close collaboration with health services, needs to enhance parents’ education (through workshops and individual counselling), during the critical period from birth to 36 months of age. The aim of the joint activities will be to strengthen parents and teach them how to conduct learning play activities in all areas of child development: perceptual, cognitive, language, gross and fine motor, social and emotional development plus self-help skills. All these topics should be promoted in the form of educational materials. (The preparation and distribution of these materials will be conducted in cooperation with Service Centres.)

It is necessary to establish and ensure cooperation with service centres, resource centres and commissions for orientation to ensure the full social inclusion of children with disabilities in the early and preschool education system. In service centres, case managers will be appointed for each child and family. The case manager will provide

psychosocial support and social protection services for families through home visits and centre-based meetings, as needed. He/She will also visit preschool institutions a minimum of four times per year to support the full implementation of individual educational plans and to deal with any problems that may arise. The reports of the case manager will be governed by the policies and procedures of early childhood intervention services, will be private, and will be kept within the child portfolio.

It will be necessary to develop and implement beneficiary models, including operational policies and procedures, for the inclusion of the most vulnerable children in the process of early and preschool education, and to improve the cooperation and active participation of the local community and other counterparts.

Cooperation modalities and defined inter-sectoral procedures for the development of mechanisms for the use of services offered by all relevant sectors will be improved and further developed through the future Strategy for an integrated approach to early childhood development.

Objective 5. To fully harmonize normative acts and regulations, with the aim of establishing a comprehensive system of early and preschool education and providing diverse support for the development of all children before they enrol in primary school.

It will be necessary to harmonize existing legal regulations with the most recent trends and strategic recommendations in order to improve mechanisms for exercising child and parental rights and to regulate the roles and responsibilities of the system of early and preschool education with all other relevant actors that implement activities in this area. A set of new regulations and standards will be developed, including the following: expansion of services of early and preschool education; Toy and Book Libraries in each preschool institution; interactive services; specialized and shorter programmes; education for parents and guardians; transition to primary school; inclusion of children from marginalized and the most vulnerable population groups; interdisciplinary early childhood intervention; public and private partnerships, private initiatives and so on.

Also, it will also be important to revise the existing standards of work of professional staff at the preschool level, with a special focus on staff with secondary education, preschool assistants, and volunteers.

The plan for the development of these regulations and standards will be based on international and national experiences in these fields, in accordance with new or revised services and through the widest possible participation of all stakeholders. The regulations and standards will be harmonized with the best examples from Europe.

Objective 6. To ensure the advocacy and promotion of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education through the active involvement of the media and other forms of social communication.

Early and preschool education will be energetically promoted and advocated throughout Montenegro through the use of media and other forms of social communication.

Professionals and the general public will be informed about the objectives, tasks, activities and measures planned in the Strategy.

The campaign will be organized with the goal of emphasizing the critical importance of early and preschool education for achieving holistic childhood development. The campaign will provide information to parents about available services, and the ways in which they can establish contacts with implementing agencies. In addition, it will be necessary to develop special communication messages that will promote the importance of early learning and development, in order to change current approaches and improve practical work in homes, nursery and preschools. The active participation of the media (radio, TV, printed media, Internet) will be ensured and early childhood experts will make sure that the contents of messages are correct, easy to understand and adapted to targeted audiences. During this process the active participation of children and parents will be assured.

In addition, it will also be important to develop methods for advocating for the importance of civil society and private sector activities and initiatives.



Action Plan and timetable for implementing the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education

The Action Plan represents a four-year framework for the implementation of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education. The goals and objectives contained in the Action Plan also list key tasks for implementation. For each task, the main activities are specified, as well as implementing agencies and deadlines⁴⁴, indicators and ways to measure achievements, as well as the budget for the implementation of these activities. At the end of each objective, there is a short comment regarding the risk factors for the achievement of planned activities. The annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan will be provided and revised, if needed.

It is necessary to consider the timeframe for each activity listed in the Action Plans:

- Work Plan for project preparation with activity plans - 3 months;
- Development and adaptation of curriculum, development of educational materials; methods; manuals; work methodologies, monitoring and evaluation; procedures and regulations; implementation of campaigns - 9 months to 1 year;
- Piloting of innovative activities - from 1 to 2 years;
- Planning and capacity building - from 3 to 6 months;
- Monitoring and evaluation of quality of services - from 1 to 2 years;
- Revision and improvement of activities in line with an evaluation report - to 3 months.

Montenegro is a potential candidate for membership of the European Union. On its way to achieving the requirements for membership, there are supportive resource programmes. IPA programmes provide an opportunity for project applications aimed at supporting the institutions, development of civil society and so on. The Ministry of Education and Sports will be calling for all international organisations and other partners to support the implementation of various activities presented in the Action Plan.

The aim of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education:

The system of early and preschool education will fulfil requirements to ensure the provision of accessible, high quality, comprehensive, culturally appropriate and inclusive services for all children in Montenegro, from birth until they enrol in primary school, with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable children.

⁴⁴ Deadlines for implementation are presented by quarters (the 1st quarter marks the period January-March; 2nd quarter – April-June; 3rd quarter July-September; 4th quarter October- December). In the text below, the quarters will be indicated by 1Q, 2Q, 3Q, 4Q.

Objective 1. To increase the coverage of children by the system of early and preschool education, for all children and their parents and guardians, through expanding physical capacities and ensuring the development of diverse and expanded models of services of early and preschool education

No.	Tasks	Activities	Implementing agencies and deadlines	Indicators and ways of control	Financial assessment
1.	To expand, repair and develop physical capacities and the infrastructure for early and preschool education and to improve working conditions in all preschool institutions	Prepare a Feasibility Study for the phased and continuous expansion of physical capacities, the equipping of preschool institutions, the employment of new staff, etc.	The Ministry of Education and Sports (MES), Ministry for Spatial Planning and Environment, Bureau for Education (BE), local communities Deadline: 3Q/2011	Report and recommendations	€ 15,000
		Develop a plan for expanding and equipping preschool institutions based on the Feasibility Study	MES, local communities Deadline: 4Q/2011	Plan developed	€ 2,000
		Expand, repair and develop physical infrastructure in accordance with plans, with activities relating to the collection of documentation, organization of legal tenders for selection of contractors, including construction (the pace of construction will be harmonized with the results of the feasibility study and the priorities).	MES, local communities Deadline: 2012-2015	Number (no.) of preschool institutions, coverage of children	€ 1,100,000 Annually
		Equip preschool institutions in accordance with annual assessments and the plan	MES, local communities Deadline: 2011-2015	No. of equipped preschool institutions, list of equipment provided	€ 105,000 Annually
2.	To establish and implement services of Toy and Book Libraries	Define the protocol of cooperation with local communities to establish the Toy and Book Libraries	MES, local government Deadline: 2Q/2011	Protocol of cooperation established and implemented	Regular activity
		Develop a work plan for Toy and Book Libraries, describe work and work procedures	MES, local government Deadline: 3Q/2011	Work plan and work description defined and implemented	€ 5,000
		Train preschool teachers in 3 municipalities to provide educational services for parents, including methods, materials, and support services for parents.	MES, BES, local government, donors Deadline: 2Q/2012	Training implemented in 3 municipalities, no. of training programmes implemented and no. of persons trained, reports	€ 8,000
		Purchase and development of educational materials	MES, Bureau for Textbooks and Educational Materials (BTEM), local government, donors Deadline: 2Q/2012	Materials purchased and distributed, no. of developed didactic materials	€ 35,000

		Open and equip Toy and Book Libraries	MES, local government, donors Deadline: 3Q/2012	Libraries opened and operational, according to plan, work reports, no. of children and parents covered, range and types of services offered and provided	€ 30,000
		Evaluation of work of pilot Toy and Book Libraries	BES, external evaluator Deadline: 3Q/2013	Outcomes in terms of improved parental skills and knowledge and improved child development; reports and recommendations prepared and distributed	€ 5,000
		Expand this service to all of the municipalities/preschool institutions	MES, local government, donors Deadline: 1Q/2014	Toy and Book Libraries established in all 21 municipalities, no. of children and parents covered, no. of trained staff, no. of services rendered to parents and children.	€ 100,000
3.	To establish and implement interactive services for children and parents who live in remote rural areas.	Assess the number of children and needs in remote rural areas of Montenegro	MES and local government Deadline: 4Q/2011	Research undertaken, report and recommendations prepared	€ 4,000
		Work description, procedures and methodology of home visits developed	MES and local government Deadline: 2Q/2012	Work description, work procedures and methodology of home visits established	€ 5,000
		Develop Protocol on inter-sectoral cooperation, cooperation with preschool institutions, and Toy and Book Libraries	MES and local government Deadline: 3Q/2012	Protocol defined, as well as the procedures	Regular activity
		Train caregivers for home visits and work with parents and children in the family setting	BES, donors Deadline: 2Q/2013	No. of training programmes, reports from training	€ 10,000
		Opening of interactive services within three preschool/school facilities, implementation of its activities	MES, local government, donors Deadline: 4Q/2013	Work reports, no. of visits, no. of parents and children served, assessment of views of service users	€ 15,000
		Evaluate the system, revise it, and apply in all regions where needs have been recognized	BES, external evaluator Deadline: 4Q/2014	Services implemented throughout Montenegro, no. of parents and children served, assessment of views of service users	€ 15,000

4.	To develop and implement a flexible and appealing mechanism and model of inclusion of children from marginalized and the most vulnerable population groups into the system of early and preschool education	For RAE children, implement the model of positive affirmation – involvement of children from the RAE population into the system of early and preschool education, free of charge	Council for child rights, MES, MLSW, local government, NGOs Deadline: 3Q/2012	Model adapted and applied, no. of children, assessment of views of service users	€ 30,000
		Develop programmes of home visits for families of RAE children in order to inform them about the importance of early and preschool education	Council for children's rights, MES, local government, Roma NGOs Deadline: 1Q/2012, continuously	Reports from home visits, no. of families, no. of children	€ 6,000
		Ensure the implementation of the “Roma assistants” programme in all communities where the RAE population live	MES, local government, NGOs, donors Deadline: 3Q/2012	No. of assistants, no. of preschool units with Roma assistants, no. of RAE children enrolled in services	€ 12,000*
		For children with developmental delays and disabilities, allow free access to preschool institutions from the moment of identifying the special need, based on parental consent and the report of Commission for Orientation	Council for child rights, MES, local government, MLSW, MH, parents' associations, donors Deadline: 2Q/2012	Model developed, adapted and implemented, no. of children served, assessment of views of service users	€ 30,000
		Develop, adapt and implement the model of supported inclusion (free of charge) of children, using the financial family allowance from the earliest age	MES, local government, MLSW, NGOs, donors Deadline: 3Q/2012	Model adapted and implemented, no. of children, assessment of views of service users	€ 30,000
		Apply the principle of inclusion for children without parental care placed in an institution, and include all in the nearest preschool department	MES, local government, MLSW, NGOs, donors Deadline: 3Q/2011	No. of joint activities implemented, no. of children involved, reports	€ 5,000
		After the process of deinstitutionalisation of children without parents, develop, adapt and implement the model of supported inclusion (free of charge) of children in system of early and preschool education	Council for child rights, MES, local government, MLSW, NGOs, donors Deadline: 4Q/2013	Model adapted and implemented, no. of children, assessment of views of service users	€ 10,000
		Develop a variety of support services, such as assistants, volunteers, training of volunteers, and evaluation of their work	MES, local government, MLSW, MH, NGOs, donors Deadline: 1Q/2012	No. of assistants, volunteers, preschool units with children, reports on voluntary work	€ 15,000*

* This symbol will be used as a sign for possible budgetary expansion in regard to successful realisation of the planned activities, the additional resources will be charged form the donors.

5.	To implement specialized and shorter programmes in preschool institutions, as well as recommended programmes for preparation for primary school.	Implement, monitor and evaluate specialized programmes	BES, preschool institutions, civil sector Deadline: 4Q/2012	No. of accredited programmes, coverage of children, evaluation of comments of the service users, evaluation reports, child development outcomes measured.	€ 10,000
		Implement, monitor and evaluate shorter programmes	BES, Preschool institutions, civil sector Deadline: 4Q/2012	No. of accredited programmes, coverage of children, views of the service users, evaluation reports	€ 10,000
		Implement, monitor and evaluate programmes for the transition period (from 5 years of age to primary school enrolment)	BES, preschool institutions Deadline: 1Q/2012	No. of accredited programmes, coverage of children and parents, views of the service users, evaluation reports	€ 10,000
6.	Include initiatives from the civil society and private sector in the preschool institutional framework, as well as initiatives by individuals who provide informal childcare in families until children enrol in primary school (paraprofessionals, babysitters, nannies, grandparents, relatives or neighbours).	Develop and implement a flexible mechanism and model of inclusion of the civil society and private sector in the services of early and preschool education	MES, BES, civil sector Deadline: 2Q/2011	Mechanism established and model accepted by the stakeholders; no. of recognized services and coverage of children	€ 5,000
		Develop mechanisms for identifying individuals who informally care for children in families until they enrol in primary school (paraprofessionals, babysitters, nannies, others).	MES, BES, local government, civil sector Deadline: 1Q/2013	Identification of mechanisms established and in use; no. of identified individual child caregivers served	€ 10,000
		Develop a model for the training and monitoring of the work of those individuals (paraprofessionals, babysitters, nannies).	BES Deadline: 1Q/2014	No. of training programmes, no. of trained individuals, reports regarding monitoring of the work and coverage of children	€ 10,000
7.	To provide staff for the implementation of planned activities within the early and preschool education system	Develop an employment plan based on the Feasibility Study	MES, BES, preschool institutions Deadline: 4Q/2011	Plan developed	Regular activity
		Ensure that employment based on the plan is implemented (the pace of employment will be based on the expansion of facilities and the introduction of various models of early and preschool education)	MES, preschool institutions Deadline: 2012-2015	No. of persons employed	€ 1,220,000 annually

Risk factors for Objective 1: The planned pace of implementation of the activities may be delayed by the current global economic crisis. Planned expansion of capacities may be postponed by the complex nature of the procedure for fully meeting construction requirements. In addition to this, one should count on potential resistance of staff to changes, training and the use of new methods, approaches and materials.



Objective 2. To develop a system of continuous improvement, monitoring and innovation for quality with regard to services of early and preschool education.

No.	Tasks	Activities	Implementing agencies and deadlines	Indicators and control mechanisms	Financial assessment
1.	To develop and implement targeted and structured curricula for children up to the age of 3.	Develop comprehensive and detailed curricula, educational materials, methods and learning toys for effective work with children up to the age of 3	BES, hired experts Deadline: 4Q/2011	Plan developed and adopted by the Council for General Education, and published in the Official Gazette; educational materials developed, field tested, revised, translated, and published	€ 10,000
		Train staff to work in accordance with the new curricula, materials, methods and learning toys and place an emphasis on the training of trainers	BES, BTEM, trained trainers, donors Deadline: 1Q/2012	No. of training programmes, no. of persons trained, no. of trainers' implementation reports	€ 15,000*
		Prepare manuals for teachers and caregivers in order to implement, in a functional manner, educational and early development activities with children up to the age of 3	BES, BTEM, hired experts, donor Deadline: 3Q/2012	Manuals developed, approved by the Council for General Education, and distributed	€ 10,000*
		Develop and implement recommendations for the team work of preschool teachers and nurses and the active participation of parents and guardians	BES, preschool institutions Deadline: 2Q/2011	Recommendations developed and observed, assessment of views of the service users	€ 2,000
		Develop a monitoring system and instruments regarding levels of child development at 9 months, 12 months, 18 months, 24 months and 36 months of age	BES, hired experts, donor Deadline: 1Q/2012	Instruments developed or adapted	€ 5,000
		Training of staff to use the monitoring system of child development	BES, hired experts, donor Deadline: 4Q/2012	No. of training programmes, no. of persons trained, instruments used, implementation reports	€ 15,000*
		Monitor the implementation of the new curriculum, educational materials and methods, analysis of further needs and give recommendations for improvement	BES, preschool institutions Deadline: 4Q/2013	Reports and recommendations	€ 5,000

2.	To improve, modernize and implement targeted, structured curricula for children from the age of 3 to the age of 6 years	Analyze, improve and modernize curricula, materials, methods and media for work with children from the age of 3 to the age of 6 and their parents	BES, hired experts Deadline: 2Q/2011	Plan developed and adopted by the Council for General Education, published in the Official Gazette	€ 2,000*
		Train staff to work in accordance with the new curricula, materials, methods and media	BES, trained trainers, donor Deadline: 1Q/2012	No. of training programmes, no. of persons trained, implementation reports	€ 15,000
		Prepare manuals for educational and early development work with children from 3 to 6 years of age and their parents	BES, BTEM, hired experts, donors Deadline: 3Q/2012	Manuals developed, approved by the Council for General Education and distributed	€ 10,000*
		Develop monitoring system for child development from 3 to 6 years (levels and domains of the development)	BES, hired experts, donor Deadline: 1Q/2012	Guidance for monitoring system developed	€ 5,000
		Training of staff to use developed instruments and monitoring system	BES, trained trainers, donor Deadline: 1Q/2013	No. of training programmes, instruments applied, implementation reports	€ 15,000
		Monitor the implementation of the revised curriculum, analyze further needs and give recommendations for improvements	BES, preschool institutions Deadline: 1Q/2014	Report by external evaluator	€ 5,000
3.	Development of new specialized and short programmes in preschool institutions	Conduct participatory research on the needs, interests of children and families for additional specialized and shorter programmes	BE, preschool institutions, civil sector Deadline: 2Q/2011	Research report, plans for programmes based on research results developed	€ 10,000
		Develop specialized programmes in accordance with research recommendations	BE, preschool institutions, civil sector Deadline: 4Q/2012	No. of accredited programmes, no. children, comments of the service users	€ 5,000
		Develop short programmes in accordance with research recommendations	BE, preschool institutions, civil sector Deadline: 4Q/2012	No. of accredited programmes, no. of children, comments of the service users	€ 5,000
		Develop and implement the programme of psychosocial support for the most vulnerable group of children and their families	BE, preschool institutions, civil sector Deadline: 4Q/2013	No. of accredited programmes, no. of children, comments of the service users	€ 10,000*
		Evaluate the implementation of specialized and shorter programmes and revise them	BE Deadline: 4Q/2014	Evaluation report	€ 5,000

4.	To improve, modernize and implement activities regarding the preparation of children for primary school	Improve and modernize shorter programmes for the preparation of children for primary school	BES, preschool institutions, hired experts Deadline: 2Q/2011	Programmes developed, adopted and accredited	€ 2,000
		Design and develop plans and programmes of cooperation between preschool institutions and primary schools	BES, preschool institutions and primary schools Deadline: 3Q/2011	Protocol on cooperation established and team established, which meets at agreed intervals	€ 2,000
		Implement joint activities of preschool institutions and primary schools	BES, preschool institutions and primary schools, hired experts Deadline: 1Q/2012	No. of activities and no. of children	Regular activity
		Develop/adapt the existing curriculum in cooperation with parents and in accordance with the parents' needs analysis	BES, preschool institutions and primary schools, hired experts and parents Deadline: 1Q/2013	Report from the needs assessment, programme developed, no. of parents	€ 2,000
5.	To organize training for parents in their mother tongue in all preschool institutions, including all aspects of early development and learning	Develop a high quality and sustainable system of training and support for parents within preschool institutions and in home settings	MES, BES, preschool institutions Deadline: 4Q/2011	System of training developed and implemented	€ 5,000
		Prepare a complete set of materials and a comprehensive manual for parent education and harmonize them with messages for parents provided by other sectors (e.g. health, nutrition and social protection).	MES, BES, donors Deadline: 2Q/2012	Complete set of parent education materials developed	€ 10,000
		Train preschool teachers and others to conduct parent education programmes	MES, BES, donors Deadline: 4Q/2012	No. of trained teachers and others, evaluation reports	€ 15,000
		Develop and implement support to parents through educational workshops, promotion of the importance of preschool education and early development in three pilot preschool institutions and evaluate the services and continuing needs	MES, BES, preschool institutions Deadline: 3Q/2012	No. of training programmes, no. of parents, evaluation reports	€ 8,000*
		Expand this service to all municipalities	MES, BES, preschool institutions Deadline: 1Q/2014	No. of trainings, no. of parents included, evaluative reports, evaluation of comments of the service users	€ 20,000



6.	To improve the capacities of the Bureau for Educational Services in order for it to be able to take over new duties related to monitoring and evaluating the system of early and preschool education	Improve and define indicators and the plan for monitoring and evaluation, including the description of tasks, key activities and work dynamics	MES, BES Deadline: 1Q/2012	Draft plan developed, work plan reviewed and adopted.	€ 5,000
		Develop and/or select instruments to be used for the monitoring of various activities	BES, consultant Deadline: 4Q/2012	Instruments finalized and adapted and implemented; implementation reports	€ 10,000
		Implement training for counsellors and supervisors	BES, donor, hired consultant Deadline: 2Q/2013	Training programme reports, no. of training programmes and no. of persons trained	€ 5,000
		Implement monitoring in the field	BES Deadline: 1Q/2014	Reports by supervisors, external evaluator	Regular activity
		Design and implement research projects related to early and preschool education, with the aim of improving practical work	BES, research institutes within the Faculty of Philosophy, Niksic, donors Deadline: 1Q/2012 continuous	No. of research projects implemented	€ 10,000 annually
		Conduct research on existing specialists working in preschool institutions and based on the research and recommendations, develop a plan for professional development	Hired experts Deadline: 4Q/2012	Research report and recommendations	€ 5,000
		Adjust the self-assessment model of preschool institutions and its use in practice	BES Deadline: continuous	Monitoring indicators defined, no. of training programmes and no. of persons trained, self-assessment reports	€ 10,000
		Improve quality standards based on principles of early learning and development	BES Deadline: continuous	Standards improved, observational reports	€ 4,000
		Develop a feasibility study that justifies the establishment of an Institute for Early Childhood Development	Government, hired consultant Deadline: 3Q/2015	Study developed, report and recommendations prepared	€ 5,000
7.	To develop an accessible, functional, applicable and fully compatible database	Define operational indicators in accordance with the needs of preschool education and early development and develop software for the database	MES Deadline: 2Q/2011	Indicators defined, plan for data gathering developed and implemented, database accessible.	€ 5,000*
		Develop software for electronic enrolment (electronic enrolment card) in the preschool institution, which will be connected with the central database and implemented in each preschool institution	MES Deadline: 1Q/2013	Software developed and implemented	€ 10,000*
		Programme implemented in every preschool institution and the staff trained	MES Deadline: 1Q/2014	Plan developed, data collected and usable, no. of persons trained	€ 35,000

Risk factors for Objective 2: It is possible that the process of implementation will be delayed due to potential resistance to changes, new approaches, methods and use of improved instruments for the monitoring of the quality of services. In addition to this, there is an insufficient number of staff and insufficient capacities among the staff to implement the planned activities without putting into operation the training programmes outlined above. Also, previous practice has showed that the participation of parents has tended to be low when it comes to participating in services for the improvement of parenting skills.

Objective 3. To improve and develop a comprehensive system of pre-service education for professional staff working in the early and preschool education system, and to create possibilities for their continuous professional development.

No.	Tasks	Activities	Implementing agencies and deadlines	Indicators and control mechanisms	Financial assessment
1.	To improve the existing curriculum of the basic education study programme for preparing preschool education teachers	Develop the plan for improving basic education for early and preschool education	University Deadline: 3Q/2011	Report and recommendations	€ 5,000
		Introduce compulsory research and practical activities/work for students in cooperation with preschool institutions	University Deadline: 3Q/2012	Clearly developed curriculum, approved by the Senate of the University	€ 5,000
		Develop and introduce a programme related to educational and early development work with children up to the age of 3	University Deadline: 3Q/2012	Programme developed and adopted by the Senate of the University	€ 5,000
2.	To develop curricula focused on working with children up to the age of 3 within the specialized and Master Studies	Develop a major in these specialized studies focusing on work with children up to the age of 3	University Deadline: 3Q/2012	Curriculum developed and adopted by the Senate of the University; no. of enrolled students	€ 5,000
		Provide accreditation for Masters studies in the programme for early and preschool education that will include the area of early learning and development	University Deadline: 3Q/2013	Curriculum developed and adopted by the Senate of the University; no. of enrolled students	€ 5,000
		Ensure additional literature for the area of early development and education	University Deadline: 3Q/2013	Literature provided	€ 5,000
3.	To develop a plan and programme of in-service, continuous professional development of key specialists involved in early and preschool educational system	Develop a plan for professional development in preschool institutions	BES, civil sector Deadline: 1Q/2012	Plan developed and standards adopted by all key actors	Regular activity
		Implement training programmes in line with the adopted plan of professional development for preschool institutions	BES, civil sector, donors Deadline: 2Q/2013	No. of training programmes and no. of trained professionals	€ 25,000
		Conduct annual monitoring and evaluation of activities for professional development	BES, external evaluator Deadline: 2Q/2014	Reports from monitoring and evaluation of training programmes	Regular activity
4.	To develop a system of training that will collaborate with secondary school education programmes, including volunteers and paraprofessional assistants.	Develop and implement the plan and programme of formal additional education for persons through collaborating with secondary school education at the College for Nurses, in cooperation with the Faculty of Philosophy (Study programme for preschool education)	University of Montenegro, BES, Centre for vocational education (CVE) Deadline: 1Q/2013	Plan and programme developed, and approved, no. and types of training programmes and no. of persons trained, evaluation reports	€ 25,000
		Develop and implement the plan and programme of training for persons collaborating with secondary school education through the system of professional development	BE, CVE, donors Deadline: 4Q/2012	Plan and programme developed, and approved, no. of training programmes, and no. of persons trained, evaluation reports	€ 10,000

Risk factors for Objective 3: The global economic crisis may slow down the pace of development and adoption of new study programmes, as well as the expansion of the curricula at the University of Montenegro. In addition to this, insufficient capacities of the staff could slow down the process of support to professional development.

Objective 4. To ensure multidisciplinary, well-coordinated and sustainable cooperation within the entire system in order to improve the social inclusion of all children up to the age when they enrol in primary school.

No.	Tasks	Activities	Implementing agencies and deadlines	Indicators and control mechanisms	Financial assessment
1.	To establish quality and operational inter-sectoral cooperation	Develop a protocol of cooperation among the Ministry of Education and Sports the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, and local government	MES, MH, MLSW, local government Deadline: 2Q/2011	Protocol signed and implemented	Regular activity
		Define a protocol for connections among databases and for the exchange of data	MES, MH, MLSW, local government Deadline: 2Q/2011	Protocol defined, implemented, data exchanged effectively and on a continuous basis	
2.	To define operational policies and procedures for early intervention services, while observing the rights of children and parents, family law and the right to privacy.	Define a protocol of cooperation between the Centre for Children with Special Needs and preschool institutions and operational policies and procedures for Early Childhood Intervention.	Council for Children's Rights, MES, MH, CDPP, preschool institutions Deadline: 4Q/2011	Protocol established and in force	Regular activity
		Identify children from zero to three years of age with development delays and disabilities, or at-risk conditions, and provide intensive and individualized Early Childhood Intervention services through the mobile teams from the Centres with Special Needs in close cooperation with preschool institutions	MH, MES, CCSN, preschool institutions, donors Deadline: 1Q/2012	Coverage of children	€ 10,000*
		Develop interdisciplinary professional teams for assessing, serving and monitoring the development of children in the programme	MH, MES, CCSN, Services Centres, preschool institutions, donors Deadline: 3Q/2012	Interdisciplinary teams' reports, no. of children covered	€ 10,000
		Develop cooperation between selected paediatricians and preschool institutions	Public health centres, preschool institutions Deadline: 2Q/2012	Cooperation established and efficiently implemented, no. of workshops, meetings, the views of service consumers assessed	€ 10,000*
		Prepare and distribute educational materials on early learning for parents and guardians	Public health centres, preschool institutions, donors Deadline: 3Q/2012	Educational materials prepared, piloted and distributed, and the views of service consumers assessed	€ 10,000*

		Train personnel working in preschool institutions and other services (interactive services) to work with children up to 3 years of age and their parents and guardians.	CDPP professionals and other professionals, preschool institutions Deadline: 3Q/2012	Report on implementation of activities, no. of training programmes and no. of persons trained	€ 15,000
		Expand the services: "School for Pregnant Women" for marginalised families, develop a plan of implementation and evaluation and develop adapted educational materials for those families	Public health centres Deadline: 4Q/2012	No. of pregnant women and their partners included, and no. of materials developed	€ 15,000*
		Expand the patronage services to children and families from marginalised groups, and prepare and distribute educational materials	Public health centres, Support services Deadline: 4Q/2012	Reports on completed home visits, no. of children and families, and no. of materials distributed	€ 15,000*
		Develop a plan for implementing and educating marginalised families through educational workshops and individual counselling	Public health centres, CCSN Deadline: 4Q/2012	Reports on completed visits, no. of children and families involved, no. of workshops and individual counselling	€ 15,000*
		Establish cooperation with the future resource centres	MES, MLSW, Preschool institutions, service centres Deadline: 2Q/2013	Reports on the implementation of activities, no. of training programmes and no. of persons trained	IPA 2010
3.	Develop a model for the supported inclusion of the most vulnerable groups of children in preschool institutions	Train the teams in Service Centres (Centres for Social Work) to work with the most vulnerable groups of children and families	MLSW, service centres, MES, donors Deadline: 3Q/2013	The teams formed, no. of trainings and trained personnel, regular reports and recommendations	IPA 2010
		Establish case managers in all Service Centres (CSW) and develop a system for the functional exchange of information among different services for the purpose of social inclusion.	MLSW, service centres, donors Deadline: 3Q/2013	No. of trainings and trained personnel	
		Develop a system of functional information exchange between case managers and preschool institutions	MES, MLSW, preschool institutions, service centres and donors Deadline: 3Q/2013	Regular reports on coverage of children and child outcomes.	

Risk factors for Objective 4: Lack of coordination and connection between the activities in various sectors at the local, regional and state level, and unclear duties, procedures and responsibilities. Additional obstacles may be a lack of understanding regarding the need to introduce these activities, a lack of interest among the staff in preschool institutions to adopt and utilise principles of social inclusion, insufficient number of staff members, organizational difficulties, large work loads, no financial resources for implementation of the principle of positive affirmation.

Objective 5. To fully harmonize normative acts and regulations, with the aim of establishing a comprehensive system of early and preschool education and providing diverse support for the development of all children before they enrol in primary school.

No.	Tasks	Activities	Implementing agencies and deadlines	Indicators and control mechanisms	Financial assessment
1.	To develop a comprehensive plan for the amendment of old regulations and the development of new regulations for all key services included in this Strategy.	Make amendments and harmonize the Law on Preschool Education with other documents	MES Deadline: 1Q/2011	Laws amended and harmonized in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Strategy document	€ 5,000
		Adopt a Rulebook for the work of preschool institutions with children up to the age of 3, from 3 to 5 years of age and services for the transition period to primary school; education and support for parents and guardians; specialized and shorter programmes	MES Deadline: 4Q/2011	Rulebook adopted; analysis of implementation reports	€ 5,000
		Prepare and adopt a Rulebook for the work of Toy and Book Libraries	MES Deadline: 1Q/2012	Rulebook adopted; analysis of implementation reports	€ 5,000
		Prepare and adopt a Rulebook for the work of interactive services for children and parents who live in remote, rural areas.	MES Deadline: 3Q/2012	Rulebook adopted; analysis of implementation reports	€ 5,000
		Adopt the Rulebook for the monitoring system	MES Deadline: 1Q/2012	Rulebook adopted; analysis of implementation reports	€ 5,000
		Adopt a set of regulations regarding inter-sectoral cooperation	MES Deadline: 1Q/2012	Regulations adopted, in force, cooperation reports	€ 5,000
		Amended norms for the work of pedagogical-psychological service prepared and adopted	MES Deadline: 2Q/2012	Norms adopted and implemented	€ 5,000
2.	To develop a system of standards for high quality, comprehensive services of early and preschool education	Define and establish standards for work with children up to the age of 3, from 3 to school age, services for transition period, etc.	MES Deadline: 4Q/2011	Documents on standards adopted; assessment of views of the staff and service users regarding the quality of defined standards	€ 3,000
		Definition and establishment of standards for the work of the Toy and Book Libraries, and interactive services	MES Deadline: 1Q/2012		

Risk factors for Objective 5: Institutions of the system do not adjust and do not implement new legal provisions as planned and in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Strategy document. In addition to this, it is possible to have some incompatible activities with various sectors. Standards are defined, but they may not be viewed as mandatory/binding and there may be no clear mechanism to monitor their implementation.

Objective 6. To ensure the advocacy and promotion of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education through the active involvement of the media and other forms of social communication.

No.	Tasks	Activities	Implementing agencies and deadlines	Indicators and control mechanisms	Financial assessment
1.	To Advocate for and promote the implementation of the Strategy	Organize a round table in order to inform professionals and the public about the goals and activities defined in the Strategy	MES, donor Deadline: 1Q/2011	Round table organized, no. of participants, all relevant institutions and individuals included	€ 2,000
		Organize TV shows, ensure presence in printed and other media	MES, media Deadline: 2Q/2011 and onwards	No. of shows, texts, etc; electronic media clipping	€ 30,000*
2.	To conduct a public campaign on the importance of early and preschool education	Establish a team that will work on the objectives for the campaign and develop a plan for a continuous campaign to promote early and preschool education and the use of new services offered to children, parents and guardians	Council for Child Rights, MES, BES, preschool institutions, media Deadline: 2Q/2011	Team reports, plan established and implemented; implementation reports	
		Design communication messages (video clips, radio jingles, posters, brochures, billboards, etc.) and plan for the implementation of the campaign	MES, BES, representatives of the institutions, media, donors, local government Deadline: 3Q/2011	No. of materials developed and distributed	
		Implementation of the campaign	MES, BES, representatives of institutions, media, donors, local government Deadline: 1Q/2012-1Q/2013	Assessment of views of service users	
		Develop cooperation with the media in order to implement continuous educational shows on various aspects of early learning and development	MES, BES, preschool institutions, media Deadline: 4Q/2011 Continuous	No. of shows, assessment of the views of audience and service users	
3.	To conduct a public media campaign for parent education	Establish a team that will work on objectives; develop a plan for a continuous campaign for parent education that complements home visits and centre-based services	Council for Child Rights, MES, BES, institutions, media Deadline: 4Q/2012	Team established; reports of the team; plan developed and implemented	€ 10,000 annually
		Implementation of the campaign	MES, BES, Institute, institutions, media Deadline: 1Q/2013-3Q/2013	Services for parents promoted, assessment of views of service users	

Risk factors with regard to Objective 6: Insufficient motivation and engagement of the media or other public actors with regard to the promotion of the importance and role of early and preschool education. Few experts, public figures or organizations are ready to promote these services and/or actively participate in the campaign.

Summary of the budget to implement the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education

The following table presents the final summary of the total budget needed for the realization of the Strategy for Early and Preschool Education. The table presents the framework of financial resources summarised for each year, including expected donors' financial support.

Year 2011		Year 2012		Year 2013		Year 2014	
104.000 €		2.967.000 €		2.592.000 €		2.450.000 €	
National budget	Donor financial support	National budget	Donor financial support	National budget	Donor financial support	National budget	Donor financial support
€ 49,000 €	€ 55,000	€ 1,629,000	€ 1,338,000	€ 1,492,000	€ 1,100,000	€ 1,320,000	€ 1,130,000
<i>National Budget</i>				<i>Donor financial support</i>			
€ 4,490,000				€ 3,623,000			
Total: € 8,113,000							

To ensure the best possible start for all children from the earliest age onwards, it is necessary to increase investments in early and preschool education. The aim of the Ministry of Education and Sports is to increase allocations for early and preschool education from 9.76% to 14% by 2015. The budget allocated for early and preschool education will be revised every year. Consequently, the system of early and preschool education will be able to ensure the provision of accessible, high quality, comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and inclusive services for all children, from birth until they enrol in primary school, with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable children.



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